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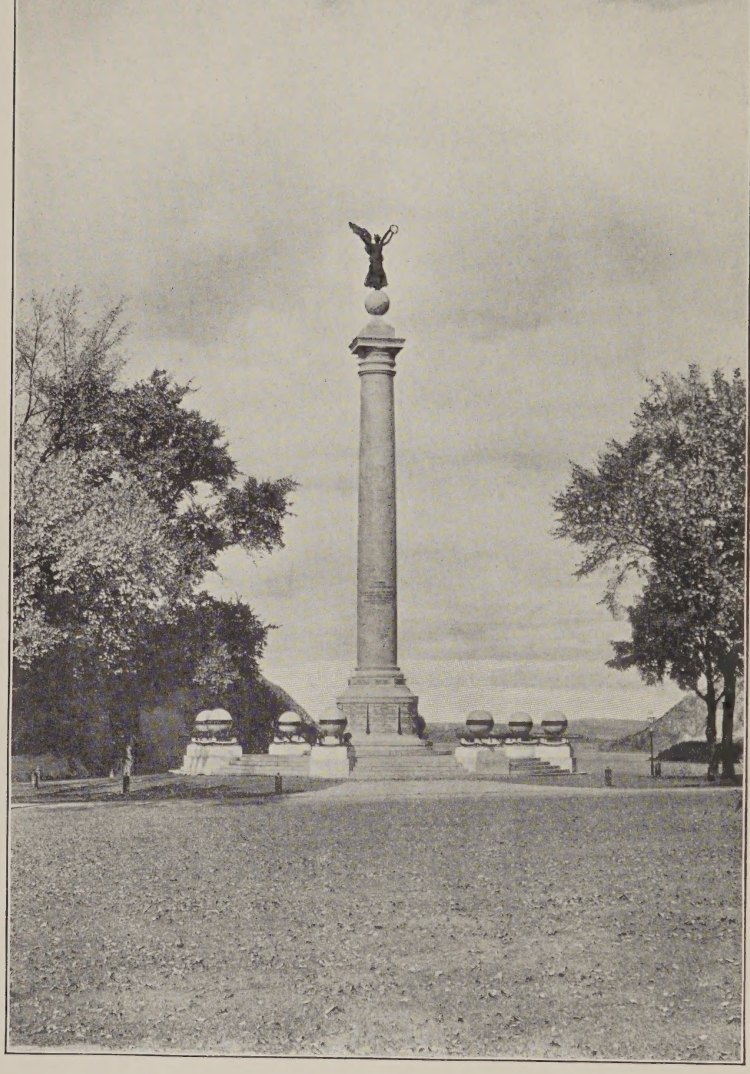

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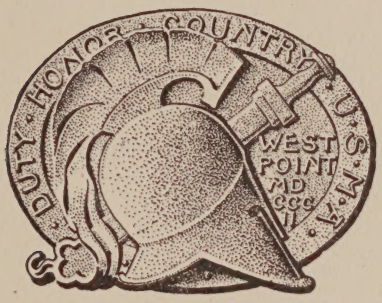
THE SPIRIT
OF
OLD WEST POINT
1858-1862

BY MORRIS SCHAFF

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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Published October 1907

TO THE SPIRIT OF OLD WEST POINT

Your author has had many, many good friends, and now to two of them, Brigadier-General Charles Shaler, U. S. Army, and Solomon Bulkley Griffin of Springfield, Massachusetts, he dedicates you in loving tribute.

Morris Schaff.

October 10, 1907.

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THE SPIRIT OF OLD WEST POINT

I

ON THE THRESHOLD

Some time during the winter of 1857–58, I received from the Hon. Samuel S. Cox, member of Congress from Ohio, representing the district composed of Licking, Franklin, and Pickaway, an appointment as cadet at West Point. I know it was winter-time, for across the vanished years I can see the family gathered before the big wood fire, and I can see my father, who had been to Newark and had stopped at the Kirkersville post-office, coming in, clad in his greatcoat, and bearing in his hand a large and significant-looking official letter.

Removing his coat and adjusting his glasses, he opened the communication from Washington and read my appointment. Oh, the quiet radiance of my mother's face! Never, I think, did fire burn so cheerily as ours burned that night, and somehow, I am fain to believe, the curling smoke communicated the news to the old farm; for the fields — how often had I wandered over them from childhood; oh, yes, how often had I seen the cattle grazing, — the corn tasseling,

and their sweet pollip of daisies and clover and shocks of ripened wheat! — all seemed to greet me the next morning as I walked out to feed the sheep. We sat long round the fire, and read and re-read the entrance requirements, both physical and mental, as set forth in the circular accompanying the appointment.

This circular, prepared by Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, himself a graduate of West Point, announced that only about a third of all who entered were graduated, and counseled the appointee that unless he had an aptitude for mathematics, etc., it might be better for him not to accept the appointment; thus he would escape the mortification of failure for himself and family. In view of my lack of opportunity to acquire a knowledge of mathematics, or, for that matter, more than the simplest rudiments of an education in any branch, I wonder now that I dared to face the ordeal. But how the future gleams through the gates of youth!

It was in the days before competitive examinations, when appointments to West Point and Annapolis were coveted, and usually secured, by the sons of the leaders in business, political influence, and social standing; and ours was the capital district. The debt of gratitude I owe to Mr. Cox is especially great, — greater than it was ever in my power, while he was living, to re-

beloved, he long since passed beyond the reach of human utterance; but whatever defects may characterize this narrative, I want the light of acknowledged gratitude to him to fall across its threshold.

At that time our country differed widely from that in which we are now living; and so great have been the changes that, could the leading merchants of our cities of fifty years ago, or the farmers who settled amid the primeval timber of the West, return, they could not distinguish one street from another, and would look in vain for the fields and woods that met their eyes from the doorstep. The population of the country, now rising eighty millions, was less than thirty-two millions, not counting the territories; and of these, nineteen millions were in the Northern, or free states, and twelve in the Southern, or slave states. The frontier was along the western boundary of Arkansas, and thence north to the Canadian line. The great tide of emigration that set in with the building of the National Road was still flowing west; while the railroads and telegraph were just beginning to push their way thither. Steamboats, called "floating palaces," could be seen at almost every bend of the beautiful Ohio and on every long reach of the solemnly impressive Mississippi.

Practically all the vast area lying west of the Hudson was devoted to agriculture, while the South, as from the early days, was still raising cotton and tobacco, finding itself year after year dropping farther and farther behind the more progressive North in commercial weight and importance. But there were no great fortunes at that time, either North or South; it is safe to say there were not throughout all the land a score of men worth a million dollars. If an estate amounted to fifty thousand dollars, it was considered large; and yet under those conditions there were refinement, courage, good manners, and wide knowledge,—qualities that went to the making of gentlemen. Colleges, called universities, were springing up everywhere over the land. Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, and Bancroft, Longfellow, Cooper, Whittier, and Emerson, had laid the foundations for our literature. In public life the foremost statesmen of the time were Benton, Cass, Corwin, Cox, Douglas, Chase, Wade, and Giddings in the West; Seward, Hale, Banks, Sumner, and Adams in the East; while the South counted among its leaders such men as Jefferson Davis and Quitman of Mississippi, Alexander H. Stephens and Toombs of Georgia, and Hunter and Mason of Virginia. Besides these there were Breckenridge and Crittenden of Kentucky, Benjamin and Slidell of Louisiana, Wig-

mention a group of arrogant and almost frenzied agitators for secession, who seemed to rise right up from the ground that was thrown out when Calhoun's grave was dug, and to whom may be attributed in great measure the dire adversity of our Southland.

The war with Mexico was still fresh in the memories of the people, and the majority of the officers who had gained distinction in it were still living, and also veterans here and there of the War of 1812; and to emphasize the march of time, I may say that a frequent visitor at my father's house was a French veteran by the name of Genêt, who had actually fought under Napoleon at Waterloo. Save with Mexico, our country had been at peace with all the world for nearly fifty years; its future, save as shadowed by slavery, glowed warmly, and pride and love for it burned in every heart.

The army consisted of 16,435 officers and men; its organization was made up of engineers, topographical engineers, ordnance, supply departments, artillery, infantry, cavalry, dragoons, and mounted rifles. The heaviest guns in the forts were 10-inch columbiads, and the small arms were all muzzle-loading smooth bores and rifles.

Grant, in utter obscurity and almost utter poverty, and fronting an outlook of utter hope-

gut was sailing the seas and not dreaming of the days to come, when, lashed to the rigging, he should lead his squadron into the battle of Mobile Bay. Lee was commanding a post in Texas, and probably had never heard of the little town of Gettysburg; Sedgwick and Thomas and "Jeb" Stuart were all on the Texas frontier, and the future seemed to offer only a slow chance for promotion; and yet, in less than five years they had risen to enduring fame. Stonewall Jackson was an instructor at the Virginia Military Institute — the West Point of the South; but he was dwelling more on the sins of this earth than on its honors, either military or civil, and was regarded by his intimates as a queer and uninteresting type of belated Roundhead. Within five years he was to rise to the pinnacle of fame, his star to the country's zenith. Sherman was teaching in Louisiana, little dreaming that he should one day lead a victorious army from Atlanta to the sea. Longstreet, the Johnstons, the Hills, Hooker, Bragg, and Forrest — the latter a slave-dealer, but the ablest cavalry leader of the Confederacy — and many another in the blue and the gray, unknown outside of local and professional associations, rose on the stormy tides of the mighty rebellion. Of these, Reynolds, who fell at Gettysburg, Webb,

Hartsuff, Saxton, Weitzel, and Hazen, of the Union; Hardee, Beauregard, Fitz Lee, Alexander, and Field, of the Confederate Army, were on duty as officers at West Point. In the corps as cadets were Wilson, Upton, Hardin, Horace Porter, Merritt, Custer, and Mackenzie of the North, while bound in ties of friendship with them were Ramseur, Wheeler, Rosser, Pelham, Young, Semmes, and Deering of the South. Whenever and wherever I have thought of them as officers or cadets, — and it has been many and many a time, — imagination has painted them marching unconsciously to the field of the high test of the soldier and the gentleman.

The war between the states was gathering much faster than we realized. Every little while, as from a cloud, sounded low and heavy rumblings; but, like distant thunder in summer, they died away; and notwithstanding they came again heavier and at shorter intervals, hopes of peace, like birds in the fields, sang on. Everywhere there was a growing fever in the blood.

The progress of events in the seventy-five years during which they had been bound together in the Constitution had forced freedom and slavery, so mutually and innately antagonistic, nearer and nearer to each other. The closer the approach, slavery on the one hand saw herself

other, the South, with increasing anger and alarm, saw in the cold look of the self-controlled North that her happiness, prosperity, social fabric, and political supremacy were threatened if not doomed. In the Ordinance of 1787 she had seen herself excluded from all the territory north of the Ohio; in 1820, forever prohibited in all the territory ceded by France, and known as Louisiana, north of 36° 30′; in 1846, excluded from all the territory purchased from Mexico; in 1850, California admitted as a free state, and the slave trade abolished in the District of Columbia. In 1854 slavery was expelled from the territory of Kansas, the blood of Northern men dripping from its hands, after a savage and brutal contest with freedom. During this process of being hemmed in, the South became more and more irritable, and, unfortunately, more domineering.

Naturally enough the social, idealistic, and temperamental differences elementary in the natures and traditions of the people grew apace. We in the West, especially those of us with Southern affiliations, hated slavery and hated New England, but generally sympathized with the South; yet in her arrogance she fast assumed an attitude of condescension and superiority over us all. Meanwhile, the Abolitionist, despised on all hands, had begun the most systematic, deliberate,

against an institution, and this crusade was carried on until at last the harassed South demanded, and the Congress passed, the Fugitive Slave Law. It was a law hateful in every feature, arousing the indignation of every natural impulse, and humiliating to the self-respect of every official called on for its execution. Then "Uncle Tom's Cabin" appeared; from door to door it went, and slavery heard its knell from every hearthstone before which it was read.

From that time an open hostility to the institution was in the plank of every Northern platform, and constantly engaged benevolent and religious associations in earnest discussion. There was no respite day or night henceforward for the great body of the people, who, standing between the fire-eaters on the one hand and the Abolitionists on the other, were ready and longing to do anything for the peace, glory, and welfare of South as well as North.

As early as 1851, South Carolina and Mississippi in their provincial egotism had threatened secession; declaring in a bullying way that they would not submit to degradation in the Union, — referring to the barricades that the people of the free states had thrown up against the extension of the institution of slavery. Meanwhile, Sumner, with manners more imperious and egotism

more colossal than the Southern States had ever exhibited, assailed slavery and, indirectly, the representatives of the South in Congress, with a kind of dogmatic statesmanship and scholastic venom — the latter intended to irritate, and succeeding in its purpose — roared out in pompous and reverberating declamation. The effect of these deplorable extremes was to weaken the natural ties that bound the sections, to drive out friendship and good will from many a home, and to substitute in their places deep and dangerous ill feelings. Now, as I look back over it all, never, it seems to me, did provincial egotism born of slavery, and bigotry born of political and moral dogma pursue their ways more blindly to frightful wastes of blood and treasure. But let this question rest: the fire-eater is gone and the Abolitionist is gone; were they to come back, the surprise of both at the results would be astounding. However that may be, in due time an idea took possession of the North, as if it had seen a vision; the Democratic party began to break before it, and the Republican party sprang up from Maine to California with almost the speed of a phantom.

When I finally left home for West Point, James Buchanan was President, and drifting into a deeper eclipse than has befallen any other who has filled that high office. Abraham Lincoln was still unknown beyond the prairies of Central Illinois.

In company with J. C. Ritchey, an appointee from the adjoining district, a son of the Honorable Thomas Ritchey of Somerset, Perry County, who, for the welfare and glory of the country, appointed General Philip Sheridan to West Point, I set out the last week in May for the Military Academy by way of Cleveland, Buffalo, and Albany.

Ritchey was a spare, dark-haired, well-bred, handsome boy, and, like myself, had never been twenty-five miles from home. Neither of us had ever seen a steamboat. And so, when we boarded the Metamora at Albany, and the colored porter proclaimed — ringing a bell with an air of great authority, as he made his way airily along the decks — that all the passengers should present themselves at the purser's office and show their tickets, neither my companion nor myself had the faintest idea which way to go. The steamboat swung out from her berth, and off down the broad sweeping Hudson, that glittered in the June sunshine, between its banks of richest green, under the blue Catskills, all dreaming, and some towering loftily in the distance, she moved. To us both the trip was like an opening to another and a surprisingly beautiful and mystic world.

with their long trains of forlorn canal-boats. The decks of the Governor Clintons, the Queens of the Mohawk, the Mary Anns of Buffalo, were deserted, save here and there a man in shirt-sleeves lolling in an armchair, a dog sprawling asleep near him in the warm sunshine, and now and then a little bareheaded child, whose only playground was the deck, toddling by its mother as she strung up some promiscuous laundry, — the whole, from the high, complacent deck of our proud steamer, a moving picture of cheerless and hopeless isolation. And yet who knows the secret pride that lingers about the captaincy of a canal-boat? who knows the good spirits that visit him, the mother and the child, as his craft by fields and woods and church-spired towns pursues its silent way? Every little while, off across the joyfully gleaming water, where the river broadened widely, men tugged waist-deep at a seine, for the shad were running. Now and then we passed a sloop or schooner with sails set, or waiting patiently for wind or tide.

I had never seen a sailing vessel before, and at that time did not know one from another. I learned the difference one golden summer afternoon while lying on the velvety green parapet of Fort Knox. (What a view and what memories the name will bring back to every graduate whose

five of us in the party, and every little while some one would speak of how some sloop or other which we could see below us was heading away from a certain schooner, or how the schooner was beating the sloop. Well, it was all Greek to me, and I finally asked, "Which is the sloop and which is the schooner?" as there were quite a number of them — and from that point they looked more like birds, they were so still and so far below us.

As most of the party were Eastern men, my question had barely passed my lips when they howled, "For God's sake, Schaff, where are you from? Don't you see that the schooner has two masts and the sloop one?" After a month or two, by remembering that the word "schooner" had more letters in it than "sloop," I was able to distinguish them.

About noon we entered the Narrows. The low, green banks, which for miles and miles had been so soothingly winsome, with their tranquil prospects reaching off and up to azured distances, suddenly swerved nearer to each other, and loomed up ahead into great, majestically calm, green-timbered heights. I had never seen a mountain before, and, as we drew closer to them, they filled my eye with wonder.

Soon we were abreast of Storm King, and now

we were at the foot of Crow Nest, which, clothed in evergreen, rises sheer fifteen hundred feet from the water's edge, its deeply silent face marked here and there with patches of gray overhanging cliffs. This mountain, Fort Putnam, the stately river, and the wide, dreaming prospect beyond it, that recedes in undulating lines of quiet fields, brooding woods, and darkening ravines to a distant, elevated horizon line sweeping far to the north with the pensive beauty of remote charm, — these with Crow Nest fill the background of every West Point memory.

The passengers had gathered in the forward part of the boat, and what a scene of river and mountains lay before us! Whatsoever our walk in life may be and whatsoever our hopes, the Hudson and the Highlands convey at this point a certain sweet exaltation to the mind of all. Oh, Mother Earth! endeared by mists and trailing clouds, by lone trees on crests against the evening sky, by voices of waters falling far up within some wild ravine on starry nights, by fields where bees are humming, — dear as all these are to me, if I could choose one scene of all your mighty compass of beauty to fill my eye at the last, it would be the Highlands of the Hudson.

The boat sped on, and I heard a passenger near by observe, "There is West Point!" My heart beat, and at once I caught the flag crimson-

VIEW NORTH FROM TOWER OF ACADEMIC BUILDING

ing in the distance. It needs but this bit of color, the proud banner lifting and swirling out gracefully, and sinking back tenderly to the mast, to blend the scene with the thrill of its heroic associations.

Soon we were at the dock, and soon we were ascending the slope that Grant, Lee, McPherson, Stonewall Jackson, Longstreet, and Warren, and many a high-hearted one — boys like ourselves — had ascended. The road from the wharf, supported by substantial retaining-walls, bears up the face of the precipitous bluff with a commanding grade. Approaching the summit it swings sharply to the left, around massively shouldered, lichened rocks overshadowed by native forest trees, then turns to the right, flanked by a heavy wall, and emerges near the library upon the Plain one hundred and sixty feet or so above the level of the river. The Plain, which is the counterpart of the campus at universities and colleges, is as level as a floor, and has an area of forty odd acres.

Although West Point has been an army post with forts and batteries since an early period in the Revolutionary War, — in fact, it has never known civil life, — yet there is nothing severe or austerely military in its presence. On the contrary, the first view one gets of it near the library is so quiet and genial in its affluence of beauty that it seems more like a realized dream than an

army post. The double rows of venerable elms margining the Plain mask the library, chapel, and the turreted, four-storied, granite barracks on the south side, and on the west the unpretentious quarters of the superintendent, the commandant, and the professors and instructors, all overlooking the velvety sward of the extensive parade.

Dominated by Crow Nest and darkly green, — for they are clothed with cedar, — the hills rise immediately, stern and shaggy, forming a mighty and lofty background for West Point. And whoever has climbed up among the hoary ledges to the ruins of old Fort Putnam and from its dreaming parapet looked down on the Plain and the river, or off to the west where the hills upheave in massive, picturesque confusion, or has viewed this background with the clouds trailing over it, or the crescent moon skimming the top of Crow Nest, has a memory which time cannot efface.

The hotel, a stone and brick structure, stands within a ragged hedge on the north side of the Point, and on the very brink of its bluff. It was built by the government, and was intended primarily for the accommodation of distinguished foreign guests and for the members of the board of visitors appointed yearly by the President to attend the annual examinations in June, and to report to Congress on the state of discipline and

the summer months it has a large patronage of cultivated and light-hearted people from all over the country. The views from its broad, elevated porch are beautiful in all directions; and that to the north, with the river breaking between Crow Nest and Storm King, the eye traveling on over Newburgh eleven miles away to the distant Shawangunk Mountains, is matchless.

The sensations of the new cadet when he reaches the Plain linger a long while. There are two West Points, — the actual West Point, and the overarching spiritual one, of which the cadet only becomes conscious about the time when he graduates. The determinate West Point that is to be his master for four years and the shaper of his destiny meets him at the top of the slope with ominous silence. He hears no voice, he sees no portentous figure; but there is communicated in some way, through some medium, the presence of an invisible authority, cold, inexorable, and relentless. Time never wears away this first feeling; it comes back to every graduate on returning to West Point, let his years and his honors be what they may. And perhaps it is just as well that it is so; that there is one place left in our country where the vanity of asserted ancestry, and the too frequent arrogance of speculative, purse-proud, and fortuitous commercial leadership, find a chill.

In the "bus" that carried us up to the hotel we fell in with another new cadet, conspicuously well dressed and with heavy dark eyes. I can recall his luxurious gold sleeve-buttons now. Nature had bestowed on him an enviable air of solemn dignity and a most promisingly developed head; yet he never mastered the course. Strange as it may seem, he was from farther west than either of us, — he was from Iowa.

A universal, incomprehensible smile met us at the hotel; the board of visitors had arrived, and there was the usual gay throng, — young ladies in the beauty of the spring of youth, and officers, spangling groups of them, with their bullioned uniforms. The unaccountable smiles conveyed an uncomfortable impression that there was something "out" or queer about us all. At first I thought it might be my hat, — one about the color of dried corn-blades, with an ambitious crown and a broad, swaggering, independent sort of brim. (I would take many a step to see it or its like again.) But I soon discovered that my Iowa friend, whose hat and clothing were in the full bloom of fashion, was quite as much a source of suppressed amusement to the young ladies, and equally the occasion of some sudden, deep pain in the side-long glances of the young officers; so I concluded that the source of this amusement and of the looks of the officers lay deeper than our clothing.

In view of the significance that Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" gave to clothes, I will add that my coat, a long-tailed one, went to old Bentz, the bugler, the notes of whose bugle, calling us to recitations, still float in my memory. Oh, how much his bugle-calls meant in those days! Thundering guns have long since died away; professors, instructors, superintendents, and commandants, once so overwhelmingly forceful, are resting mute on the distant ridges of our memory; while Bentz's uplifted bugle still glitters, and its notes vibrate softly clear across the lengthening years. May sunlight and moonlight fall lovingly where the sturdy old soldier lies! My trousers and hat were traded off with some other like apparel by "Jim" Riddle of my class to a bumboat from Cold Spring, just after dark one night after going into camp. The transaction was carried on in one of the quiet, deeply shadowed coves between Gee's Point and the old wharf, just below the hotel. The exchange was made for a bottle of mighty poor whiskey, and some kind of berry pie, my share being a piece of the latter.

Finally, some charitable soul at the hotel told us that we had better go to the adjutant's office (then in the library building) and report. Thereupon down the steps of the hotel we went, passed out through the ragged hedge, — henceforth our

limits for four years, — and followed the level, yellow, sun-beaten road toward the cool library under its bending elms. On the right, as we pursued our way, lay the deep, green Plain, afterwards trod so many times, now at drill, now at parade, and now at will with some dear fellow cadet at our side: its every blade, we may believe, holds in sweetest recollection the boys who with courageous and loving hearts trod it in the glow of their youth. On the left was the cavalry and artillery plain, and I have no doubt the old brass guns of the light battery parked upon it exchanged smiles as they saw us pass, three green boys headed toward the adjutant's office. And yet, for all your mirth, we came to know you well! We drilled beside you for three years, we saw you move off to the war, — led on by Captain Charles Griffin, our instructor in light artillery, that winter morning of 1861, — and heard the good-by of your rumbling, chuckling wheels. Once more I saw you, — when you were wheeling into "action front" near Grant's headquarters in the battle of the Wilderness.

One or two incidents of that morning of the great battle I must make a place for here. I was carrying a dispatch from General Warren to General Wadsworth, who had been killed and his lines driven through the woods before I could reach him. While on this ride I saw a soldier

From an old painting

VIEW OF WEST POINT, UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

sitting at the root of a tree near the Wilderness Run amid a clump of blue and dog-tooth violets. He had plucked some of them, and they were lying loosely now in his white, dead hand, while his head had fallen limply to the left as he rested against the tree. Was his last dream of home? of the violets blooming along the run he followed as a boy?

It was when I was returning from this ride, and had nearly reached Grant's headquarters, that the battery came rushing by. They were Regulars, and I did not know which battery it was till, as the trail of one of the pieces fell, the sergeant turned; his eye brightened and then, much to my surprise, he smiled at me; and behold! it was the old West Point battery! And I recognized the sergeant as the leader of those little devils, — the West Point drummer-boys of my day! My heart never spoke more warmly or sincerely than at that moment as my glance met his; and if I could have done so, I'd gladly have grasped his hand. Yes, we and the guns of the West Point battery came to know one another right well after that sunny day when we first met on our way to the adjutant's office.

III

FINDING OUR PLACE

We found the office, and, on reporting, crossed the boundary between civil and military life, — and there is no boundary in this world like it in its contrasts. And now, as from the height of years I look down upon ourselves at this fateful crossing, our personalities become objects of almost pathetic interest.

The adjutant was James B. Fry, who during the Civil War rose to some distinction, but not nearly to that which his services deserved, as the head of the recruiting department of the army. He took our names, the occupations of our parents, and their addresses. When he heard mine, "Kirkersville, Ohio," he smiled, as about everybody has smiled from that day to this when it is mentioned. And yet, from within a radius of twenty-five miles of Kirkersville have come Sherman, Sheridan, McDowell, Rosecrans, Curtis, Griffin, Brice, and Charles R. Woods, — all graduates of distinction.

We were turned over to a soldierly orderly, and soon were trailing behind him towards the barracks. And oh, with what form and step he preceded us, breasting, as it were, the soft June air with a front of irresistible authority; on past the dear little chapel, the only one of all the

buildings enthroned with tenderness in a cadet's memory; on past the Academic Hall, and thence into the area of the barracks. By this time he had increased his step, gaining distance somewhat between us for reasons that soon became obvious; for, shortly after we turned the corner of barracks, first one and then another pattering shower of saved-up buttons began to fall around us. This noiseless salute was coming from the cockloft, and from those and those only who just a year before were on their way to the seventh and eighth divisions with countenances as serious as those we wore.

The orderly led us across the area, up the iron steps to the stoop, and thence into the hall of the eighth division. There he tapped respectfully on the door to the left. "Come in!" responded a voice in military tones, and we entered. The little slips of paper which the adjutant gave us had barely reached the hands of the cadet officers, Kingsbury, Chambliss, and Babbitt, detailed in charge of new cadets, when instantaneously all three at once shouted to us to take our hats off and "stand at attention!" — whatever that might be — with voices boiling with indignation, and eyes glaring with panther-like readiness to jump on us and tear us to bits, as though we had seriously meditated the overthrow of West Point, and possibly of the Christian religion itself.

There is something so ludicrous, when once it is seen through, about the airs of some cadet officers, especially the lance corporals, — and, for that matter, of some of the tactical instructors also, — that it ripples like a brook in sunshine clear down through the meadows, so to speak, of West Point memories.

Ritchey and myself were commanded imperiously by Babbitt to follow *him*, — the day for "Will you please, sir," or "May I have the pleasure," had passed. We had had a view of his chest expanding in a full, broad swell of glory; and now we had one of his back, his coat embracing his waist with the lines of a wasp, his white trousers creased and immaculate, and his cap tilted just a little jauntily across his forehead, his thin, light hair brushed with such careful attention as to give an air of fastidiousness. With elastic sprightliness he mounted the stairways of the seventh division to the cockloft, and at the room on the left hand facing the area rapped peremptorily, and the next moment — had he been bursting through an animated impertinence he could not have shown more determined vigor — he sent the old door swinging on its hinges. Then marching up boldly, as only an ambitious yearling corporal can march, to some posted regulations condensed to the limit of comprehension, — I can see them now, printed on blue paper in

heavy black type, and prescribing the arrangements of clothing, bed-linen, stationery, the care of the room, and what not, — he turned about face, and announced that when our trunks were delivered, we should see to it *that they were obeyed*, indicating the regulations. This announcement having been made with due firmness and volume, he strutted away, giving us a parting look full apparently of intentions on his part of the most desperate character if we did n't look out. On his departure we turned and gazed into each other's faces, seeking hopelessly, and, from the standpoint of old age, piteously, for some explanation of our experiences at West Point up to that moment.

Later in the day George L. Gillespie of Tennessee was put into the room with us — a well-formed boy with coal-black hair and blue eyes kindled with the light of natural merriment — and a friend from that day to this. He has lately been retired a major-general at the close of an enviable record on the field, and through all the grades of the corps of engineers. God bless him this day and on to his end!

That night in the midst of profound sleep we were all yanked out by the heels, upsetting in our flight the waste-water bucket on our new woolen blankets. We had barely regained our beds when

suddenly there was a startling noise in the room across the hall. At first I thought the whole barracks were tumbling down. It seems that the occupants, to whom the previous night had brought an experience similar to ours, had decided that they would provide an automatic awakener if the visitors should repeat their devilish call. So they placed the washstands, and on top of them their chairs, against the door; when it was opened, away went the furniture with a most infernal racket. A silence as deep as the grave followed, and Custer, — the light-hearted and gallant fellow, I cannot mention his name without swimming eyes! — who with Watts of Kentucky was engaged in the hazing, told me afterward that his heart thumped like an engine, expecting every moment to hear the footsteps of officers who roomed in the division adjacent, called the "Angle."

When they found the danger past, Watts entered, and in a voice loaded with revenge asked, "Who lives in here?"

There was a strange contrast in that room. It was occupied by Kenelm Robbins, a large-boned, mild, despondent boy from Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Reuben A. Higgason, a tall, sallow, freckled, and glassy-eyed Mississippian, who had the richest vocabulary of expressive and penetrating oaths of any one I have ever met. In reply

to Watts, Robbins answered with peculiarly unassuming and deferential tones, bringing out faithfully the last three letters of his name "Mr. Robb*ins !*"

Then we heard, "Good God! Mr. Robb*ins*, come out of this!" and the next moment our ears recorded him as hustling the overturned chairs aside and then scooting to the end of the hall, followed by Higgason, whose bony ankle was in Custer's grasp. Then their tormentors let go of them, and softly and quickly vanished down the stairs. Soon we heard them making their way back. Robbins was speechless, but Higgason opened every stop of his oath-organ, and he kept it going till I went to sleep, and I do not know how much longer.

The poor fellow, like Ritchey, failed in his entrance examinations, and together they disappeared. I have never seen or heard of either of them since, and have often wondered where life's currents bore them at last, — I hope to good cheer, success, and happiness.

Perhaps at this point, as well as at any other, some reference may be made to hazing, for it has been made to appear that it assumed a brutal and vulgar phase at West Point. When I reported, it was running full tide, and while it made life sufficiently miserable for me, yet, as I look back over it all, smiles rather than frowns gather.

At the risk of being charged as a covert advocate, I must say that it was a mighty leveler in my day; and that the fellow who got it worst and most frequently, if he did not deserve it, at least courted it by some lofty manner or resented witticism. To be sure, sometimes, a profoundly rural simplicity, some queer wild look, tone of voice, or manner, would get faithful if not undue attention.

As an example, Custer, Noyes, "Gimlet" Lee, Edie, and Cushing — the Cushing of Cushing's Battery — and others of their set, would gather about one of my classmates from Maine, a serious, rather broad and logy countryman, and insist on seeing and examining the wheels of a huge double-cased silver watch he had brought with him; then they always wanted to listen to its ticking, and would ask many questions. They never seemed to get tired of having him wind it, and tell them about the last man that repaired it, or of asking how he dared to risk his life through New York with it; insisting daily on taking him to the sun-dial in the area, and threatening at last that if he did n't bring it to running accurately with the dial, they would have to report him for carrying a timepiece that discredited the official time, and thereby reflected on them as *officers* of the *army*. I can see the crowd around him, and more mischievous countenances never twinkled in a light-hearted group.

One of them, Cushing, a day or so after reporting, saw me leaning, downhearted and lonely enough, against a post of the stoop. It was after dinner and I was overlooking the crowd of yearlings who had assembled at the verge of limits. Their glittering brass buttons, jaunty caps, trim figures, and white pants still enliven for me the memory of that old drum-echoing area. Cushing fastened his eye on me and then asked, his prominent white teeth gleaming through his radiant smile, "What is your name, *Animal?*" — the title given by the third-class men to all new cadets.

"Schaff," I answered demurely.

"Come right down here, Mr. *Shad*," commanded Cushing.

Well, I went, and had the usual guying, and subsequently was conducted over to a room in the second or third division, where I was ordered to debate the repeal of the Missouri Compromise with another *animal* by the name of Vance, from Illinois, whose eyes were so large and white as almost to prolong twilight. And, by the way, the next day at dinner while sitting just opposite him, a boiled potato grazed my ear and landed with a great splash in his soup. Vance, seeing it about the time it passed me, involuntarily closed his eyes, but the spatter of the soup opened them — and so widely as to display an additional zone of white. Then he began to apply his handker-

chief, — we did not have napkins in those days, — muttering what sounded like horrible oaths, while some of us who had escaped grinned, wondering how soon another missile would come our way. Of course, the potato was not aimed at Vance; and I suppose the cadet who threw it never knew where it landed. For the first captain (it was the tall, dark-eyed, sombre, gaunt, determined Paine of Massachusetts, whom Jesup of Maryland and two others attacked with swords just after breaking ranks one day in marching from that same mess-hall) was on the lookout for that sort of thing. To avoid detection the yearling had to watch his chance, have the potato in his hand ready, and when he thought the way clear, let it go, resume his fork, and fasten his eyes on his plate mighty quickly, even before the potato had cleared half the length of its journey. Vance, with great gallantry, helped to rally our lines in the face of Hood's heroic division on the battlefield of Chickamauga.

I stayed over a month at Gettysburg after the battle, collecting and shipping the arms and guns left on the field, — there were 37,574 [1] muskets, — and more than once I

[1] It was officially reported when those guns were examined that 24,000 of them were loaded, half containing two loads each, one fourth from three to ten loads each. In many of these from two to six balls were found with only one charge of powder. Twenty-three loads were found in one Springfield rifle, each loaded in regular order. Twenty-two balls and sixty-two buckshot, with a corresponding quantity of powder, all mixed up

stood where the brave Cushing gave up his life, right at the peak of Pickett's daring charge. Oh, that day and that hour! History will not let that smiling, splendid boy die in vain; long her dew will glisten over his record as the earthly morning dew glistens in the fields. Fame loves the gentleman and the true-hearted, but her sweetheart is gallant youth.

Two or three others died there who were at West Point with me, namely "Rip" McCreery, in the Confederate service; Hazlett, little "Dad" Woodruff, and "Pat" O'Rorke, in our own. McCreery and Hazlett were Second-Class men; Woodruff and O'Rorke in the class just ahead of mine. The latter drilled me when I was in the *animal* state, and I was very — and I'm afraid hopelessly — awkward, for I was among the last to be drilled alone. Somehow, for the life of me, I could never swell out my breast, or plant one foot after another, with that determination of movement and sternness of countenance indicative of mighty and serious purpose which characterizes what is known as a "military" carriage. O'Rorke, — spare, medium in size, with raven black hair, his face inclined to freckles, but as

together, were found in one percussion, smooth-bore musket. In many of the smooth-bore guns of Confederate make was found a wad of loose paper between the powder and the ball and another wad of the same kind on top of the ball. For particulars, see the letter, now in the War Department, of the master armorer of Washington Arsenal to his commanding officer, Captain J. G. Benton, dated January 4, 1864.

mild as a May morning, his manner and voice those of a quiet, refined gentleman, — after graduating with the highest honors in the public schools of Rochester, New York, had just finished his apprenticeship as a marble-cutter when he was appointed to West Point in 1857. Previous appointments having failed to pass, the Congressman, his pride probably ruffled by the fact, set out determined to find somebody in his district who *could* graduate at the Military Academy; and, turning away from the rich and the high social levels, made choice of O'Rorke.

There is something that sets the heart beating warmly in the fact that upon his entrance to the Academy his friends, the marble-cutters and others, bought him a costly and richly engraved gold watch as a token that they were proud of him.

He drilled me under the blooming horse-chestnuts on the east side of the Academic Hall; I can see him now, and the pink-tinted, pompon-like blossoms among the long leaves over us. Moreover, I well remember his looking at his watch while giving me a little rest, probably nearly bored to death, and wondering how much longer he had to endure it. He graduated at the head of his class, and in less than eighteen months was brevetted twice for gallant and meritorious conduct. The fall before the Gettysburg campaign he became Colonel of the 140th

New York; and some time in the winter of 1862–63 I received, while at Fort Monroe, his wedding-cards — the bride's name was Clara Bishop. This was his boyhood's love, and to it he remained steadfast while honors were falling about him.

The battle of the second day of Gettysburg had opened, Longstreet had begun his mighty attack up the Emmitsburg Road, and O'Rorke's brigade under Weed was just mounting a ridge beyond which the battle was raging. Warren, who had been on Round Top, and seeing at once that it was the key to the field, dashed down for troops to hold it. He met O'Rorke, at the head of his regiment, and called out to him to take the regiment at once to the celebrated hilltop. Warren had been his instructor, his manner and words were orders enough for O'Rorke, and he immediately led his brave regiment diagonally up the eastern slope; meanwhile Warren flew on and sent Hazlett to follow with his guns. On reaching the top where Vincent's troops were bitterly engaged and almost overwhelmed and the air streaming with bullets, O'Rorke jumped from his horse, for no one could manage a horse there among the rocks, crying to his adjutant, Farley, now a distinguished surgeon in Rochester, "Dismount, Farley." O'Rorke threw the reins to his orderly, drew his sword, and with-

out tactical orders, turned and called out, "This way, boys," — and I think I can hear the mellow ring of his rich Irish voice, — and led the charge down over the rocks till he came abreast of Vincent's men — and there he fell. He was carried back over the ridge between the two Round Tops, and while he lay there dead on a blanket, Dr. Farley removed the watch that had been given to him by his boyhood friends and admirers. A regimental monument now marks the spot where this brave, mild-voiced, and sweet-hearted friend fell, and on it is a medallion of O'Rorke looking out over the historic field he gave his life to save. Meanwhile in the hearts of his old West Point friends who so loved him and the men who followed him and who were so proud of him, Fame has been pealing her trumpet. To the world, however, her station has been over his classmate Cushing; while thousands know of Cushing, only a few know of dear old Pat. But as surely as there is valor and the heart beats, when his spirit rose from that blanket on its flight upward — how the guns were roaring! — the angels gathered about it and the first hands that were reached out to greet him were those of Bayard and Sidney, to welcome the gallant boy to the company of gentlemen of all ages.

Hazlett — how often I saw him bearing the cadet colors, for he was the color-sergeant — fell

on Round Top about the same time as O'Rorke. He was a handsome youth; had very dark hair, deep blue eyes, and in many ways, I think, the most distinguished air of all the cadets that I recall — that mingling of the gentleman and the man of the world, a characteristic rarely displayed in one so young. While bending over Weed, who graduated a few years before him, to catch his last murmuring word, Hazlett was killed — I believe instantly. The last time I saw him alive was at Hooker's headquarters on the banks of the Rappahannock, playing chess with Flagler. Weed I never saw. But thus, on the famous hill of Round Top, and near each other, West Point lost three fine men that July afternoon. O'Rorke was twenty-seven, Hazlett twenty-five, and Weed thirty years of age.

Woodruff, who was killed the following day, — he was called little "Dad," — was one among the few very small men in the battalion. He had dark hair, a rather clouded, oldish, firm face, and serious dark eyes, and was universally popular in his class. He was mortally wounded during Pickett's charge. He was so small and frail, so courageous and so well-beloved, that those of us who had formed under the elms and marched to parade day after day with him felt sorrowful enough when we heard he was gone. I never saw so many horses lying dead on

any field as along the ridge where his and the adjacent batteries stood.

McCreery, known as "Rip" from his superfluous activity, and loud and persistent loquacity, was from Virginia. When the war came on he took his place beside his brothers of the proud Old Dominion, and was killed while carrying the colors of the 26th North Carolina the first day at Gettysburg. I heard of his death from some Confederate surgeons who had been left in charge of their wounded, and whom I met daily and always on the pleasantest of terms. I think if any of them are living, they will possibly remember some mint-juleps or whiskey toddies that we drank while sitting on the pavement in the shadow of a bank building in the square at Gettysburg. I fear that some of the volunteer officers who passed us doubted my loyalty, hobnobbing, as I did, with them; but those Confederates were first-rate fellows, and I wish now I had put a little more whiskey into every one of their glasses.

IV

THE RAW MATERIAL

THE class having reported, we were summoned to our physical and mental examinations; the latter was held in the old Academic Hall that had echoed so many footsteps, and whose walls were clammy, so to speak, with the ooze of distressingly exacting recitations. That morning for the first time I saw the Academic Board. It is made up of the superintendent, commandant, and professors, and is a formidable reality to youthful eyes. They were sitting at small desks, arranged in a crescent; the heavy bullioned epaulettes of the military staff, and the flat, brass buttons on the deep blue, scholastic dress-coats of the professors, proclaimed the dignity of the solemn array. In the middle of the Board sat the superintendent, Major Richard Delafield, a pudgy man with heavy, sandy eyebrows, abundant grayish sandy hair, and a pronounced eagle nose. He wore glasses, and had the air of an officer and a man of cultivation, invested, furthermore, with the honor of a wide and well-earned distinction. Colonel William H. Hardee, the commandant, sat on the left of Major Delafield. He was a tall man with large, solid gray eyes, a low forehead, heavy, grizzled moustache and imperial, and soldierly in bearing. Colonel Hardee was a trusted

friend of Jefferson Davis, and later a lieutenant-general in the Confederacy. In his sketch of Cleburne, the great Confederate killed at Franklin, he said, "He fell before the banner he had so often guided to victory was furled; before the people he fought for were crushed; before the cause he loved was lost." The man who could write prose like that was no ordinary man. Church, Mahan, Bartlett, French, Kendrick, Agnel, and Weir, the professors, were all beyond middle life; benignant, white locks softened the faces of most of them.

The examination was thorough, as it should have been, but it was extremely simple. I wondered then, and I wonder now, that any boy who has had a fair training at a common school should have failed to pass it; yet a number did fail. And in this connection, there is no question that I have ever thought over seriously that offers more perplexing factors than the requirements for admission to West Point. But so long as we feel a pride in Grant, Stonewall Jackson, Sheridan, McPherson, Michie, and a host of others, any exaction that puts admission beyond the reach of a farmer's or mechanic's boy who has had only a common school to go to, ought not to be adopted without overwhelming reasons.

There was one incident in my examination that has always left a doubt as to whether I crossed the

OLD ACADEMIC BUILDING, LOOKING SOUTHWEST, 1860

boundary between truth and falsehood. It was this: I had got through with everything but reading when Professor French called on me to read aloud, handing me an open book. I was rattling it off when I came to Mosheim's "History of the Middle Ages." I had never heard of Mosheim and knew very little about the Middle Ages. I first pronounced it "Mosheem," and then said "Moshime." The old professor looked up — he had a sweetly soft, generously broad face, bald, well-formed head, a fountain of still white light streaming from its dome, liquid black eyes, and that air of scholarship that manifests itself in tones of voice and in a reserved mental quiet and mental simplicity which cannot be mistaken — and inquired, "Why did you change the pronunciation, Mr. Schaff?"

Now, to make my case perfectly clear, I must say that I had noticed at chapel that he always pronounced "either" and "neither" with a long "i," and that, as I had never heard it before, it made a deep impression. Of course, the eyes of every one of the Board were on me at once, some looking mildly intent over their glasses, and some peering through them.

Whereupon I manufactured this explanation quicker than lightning. "I believe the best speakers pronounce the diphthong 'ei' *i*." Of course, it was all based on his pronunciation.

"Very good," he answered, and I sat down; and how near I — well, to say the least — prevaricated, has never been fully settled in my own mind.

I see by the original statement filed with the War Department and now before me, that there were ninety-one appointments to my class: sixty-six were admitted, eighteen were rejected, and seven did not report. Of the sixty-six, twenty-seven were from the South, and all save two, Gillespie of Tennessee and McKee of Kentucky, went with their section. The report of the examination is dated June 22, 1858; from that date, therefore, my class was an integral part of West Point.

In our first appearance as a military body, marching to dinner, we offered, as every class before us had offered, the usual and perhaps the most amusing spectacle that meets the eye at West Point. We were a column of gawky boys of all sizes, from five to six feet tall, clad in all sorts of particolored raiment; our eyes fixed, yes, glued, on the coat collar of the boy in front of us, a grim dismalness hanging in every face; all of us trying mechanically to point our toes and to comply with the fierce orders from sergeants and lance corporals who trod the earth proudly on each flank, filling the air with "hep! — hep!" Every little while some one of us lost the step or, treading on

the heels of the man in front, threw the whole line into such a hobbling mass as to cause the sergeant, in a high state of dudgeon, to plant his heels and roar out, "Halt!" The outraged officer then stalked up rapidly to the side of the awkward boy whose eyes were still glued on the coat collar ahead of him, with a hopelessness more abject than ever in his face, and in savage tones threatened the most dire punishment if it should happen again. After the mighty wrath of the sergeant had exhausted itself, he would throw a withering glance up and down the line; then, putting himself into an attitude, with great emphasis he would order the march resumed. Whereupon the sergeants and lance corporals resumed their yelps louder and fiercer than ever; and so it went on until we poor devils reached the mess-hall.

Yes, a "plebe" class marching for the first time is a mighty funny sight. But see them four years hence, marching up to the commanding officer at their last parade! What a transformation! Oh, the step now! No sergeant's or lance corporal's commands are necessary; they walk proudly and gracefully; the grim dreary cloud of plebedom has drifted off, and the faces are lit up with a flushing pride. Great, great are the changes a class undergoes in four years at West Point, — and in more ways than one.

The member of my class who bore the proudest name was Singleton Van Buren of South Carolina, a grandson of ex-President Van Buren, his mother's family the distinguished Singletons of the South. No one, I think, could fail to appreciate his good breeding; he wore its autograph in his face, his tones, his simple, quiet ways, his unobtrusive and habitual good manners. He had very dark chestnut hair and eyes, was above middle size, and carried his head in addressing you as if he were extending a compliment sincerely and deferentially. I am free to say that I never realized all the beauty of good breeding and simple good manners till I knew him. We entered the same section, — the "immortals" (the name borne by the last section or those at the foot of the class), — but I soon discovered that the road would be a hard one for him; and so it proved to be; for the following January he left us along with others, but carrying with him the affection of us all.

Among the appointments "at large" (those made by the President), besides Van Buren, was Ranald Slidell Mackenzie, son of Commodore Mackenzie, who graduated at the head of the class, and was easily the all-around ablest man in it, and who, in less than three years after graduating, commanded a division of cavalry with the rank of major-general. He had a very immobile,

inexpressive face as a boy, and a little impediment in his speech; there was very little of the spick and span ways of a soldier about him, but he had a very sweet smile, and earnest gray eyes. Mansfield, another appointment at large, was a son of the able and venerable General Mansfield, who, with hair as white as snow, fell on the field of Antietam. George W. McKee, the son of Colonel McKee, class of 1829, of Lexington, Kentucky, and Charles R. Suter, now a colonel of engineers, who I have reason to believe meets the world with the same mild, sweet ways that characterized him as a pink-cheeked boy,—both were appointments by President Buchanan. Among us, too, was Oliver J. Semmes of Alabama, a stocky, dark-eyed, broad-breasted youth, whose father was in the navy and subsequently became the famous Raphael Semmes, commander of the Sumter and the Alabama. I do not know whether Semmes be alive or not, but alive or dead, he carried a brave, fine heart. There were very few of the class who had not been to some college. Borroughs of Boston, a typical Bostonese, had been at Harvard; Mackenzie had been at Williams; Hamilton of Ohio at Western Reserve; Lovejoy — how his honest, liquid dark eyes shine across the years! — had been at the University of North Carolina; Suter, and several more, had had more or less of their education abroad.

But as I view the class now across the slumbering years, all distinctions of birth, early advantages, and those morning promises of ability, so sparkling at the outset, but alas! strewing like dead fagots the hearth of prophecy, are lost. I see them with the flush of youth on their cheeks; and a mist gathers over my eyes as one after another their faces come into view. Oh! let the dew fall and the stars shine softly where the dead lie; and when the last trumpet blows, may the gates of Heaven swing wide open to all!

V

OUR FIRST ENCAMPMENT

When the graduating exercises were over, the battalion formed in front of barracks, and, with the band at its head, the colors proudly borne, marched across the Plain to the camping-ground, alongside old Fort Clinton. I remember very well the pleasing activity as soon as ranks were broken and my surprise at seeing the tents go up so quickly, converting the site, like magic, into a little white city. Every cadet of that day can well recall the streets of that little city, the tents — of McCook, Williams, Hartsuff, and Saxton — fronting their respective companies; and with his orderly's tent pitched at a duly retired distance, Colonel Hardee's commodious, richly furnished marquee, overlooking and lording the whole scene.

Just before going into camp I was assigned to "B" Company. Up to that time I had barely spoken to any one or been addressed by any one in it. Surely, if ever there was a waif on entering camp, I was one on that June afternoon long ago. But in the company was "Nick" Bowen. He was a second-class man, to whom, as it happened, I had recited, for he had been detailed with others to prepare us by preliminary instruction for our examination. Catching sight of him now as, in

company with Powell, a blue-eyed Marylander, he was engaged in putting up his tent, I volunteered my help. I drove their tent-pins, helped to tighten the tent-cords, and finally, at a hint that some water would be desirable, set off with their waterpails and brought them back filled. After the tent was pitched, one of them, seeing that I was homeless, brought the attention of the first sergeant to my case, and I was assigned to a tent on the left of the street, occupied by another plebe, and a yearling.

Night came at last. I had lit a candle and, with my locker for a table, was writing a letter to my mother, — I dare say it was gloomy enough, — when some one struck the back of the tent with a broom, not only extinguishing the candle, but also spilling the ink all over the letter and the tent floor as well. I had barely relighted the candle and taken account of the situation, when bang! went the broom, blowing it out again. Thereupon I sat down in the darkness and let the hours wear away. Later in the night Farley and Noyes, "Gimlet" Lea and Watts and others yanked us out of bed several times. Our fastidious yearling tent-mate was in the party, for aught that I know. Friendless, unknown, and by nature reluctant to open my heart to any one, I do not think I ever passed a more dismal night. The sweetest note that could have reached my ear would have been

the bark, across the fields, of the old dog that I had hunted and played with as a boy welcoming me back home.

All through that camp I carried water for Bowen and Powell, and did most willingly everything and anything that they wanted me to do for them. The personality of the former interested me more than that of any one else I met in the corps, and, notwithstanding the lapse of time, its impression remains with the freshness of morning. The only way I can account for it is that there was about him the mystical charm of unpremeditated kindness, and of the quiet ways which are associated with perennial content. It was perhaps augmented in his case by the reputation for abilities which would have put him, had he called on them, at the head of his class. He had a soft, pleasant voice, a keen sense of humor, and a smile that his laughing eyes always forecast before it set out on its rippling way. His closest friend was Robert H. Hall, who, after distinguished services in the war, rounded out his life as a brigadier-general. The last time I saw Bowen was at the White House, on the Pamunkey, June, 1864, just after the frightful day of Cold Harbor. He was then "Baldy" Smith's adjutant-general, and I was depot ordnance officer of the Army of the Potomac, with my depot at that point. Long, long since he crossed the bar; and now, as I pen

these lines, my heart beats with a muffled tenderness, for he was kind to me.

Bowen had another classmate, Salem S. Marsh of Massachusetts, whose heart, like his own, was light. An incident connected with his death is worth perpetuating. Let me say, in order that its mysterious and moving significance may be duly appreciated, that at roll-call, cadets answer "Here" as their names are called. Each one answers "Here" perhaps eight or ten times daily. Well, when the Regular Brigade was advancing on the first day of the disastrous battle of Chancellorsville, May 1, 1863, Marsh, who had been brevetted for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battle of Fredericksburg, was in command of the 2d Regulars. They were meeting with stubborn fire of both infantry and artillery, and while he was deploying and advancing his regiment he was shot, and as the missile struck him he answered "Here," and fell dead.

Yes, Salem, you were present indeed at that last roll-call, but it was not an orderly sergeant's voice you heard. It was Duty's voice calling her roll amid the volleys and the crashing tumult of bursting shells on the field of battle — and Salem with his last breath answered "Here." In behalf of West Point, in behalf of every high-beating heart, and in the name of his good angel, we ask that Salem S. Marsh of Massachusetts be en-

rolled among the heroes of our day and of days to come.

By the end of the plebe's first month hazing, with all its irritating and sometimes funny excesses, dies away, and the rigid discipline and cast-iron routine of every-day life, which at first seem so artificial and needlessly emphasized, become familiar and really easy of observance. Moreover, the plebe is no longer an *animal*, for he is clothed in the uniform of a cadet. To be sure he cannot go to the hops, and he is at the very foot of the battalion hierarchy; yet life offers him some diversions. And among these, in my case, was the dancing-master. As soon as admitted we were turned over to him for instruction in his art. He was a proud, self-conscious Italian named Ferrero and he, the sword-master, and the leader of the band, always conveyed an impression that they resented the inequality of importance between their positions and those of the heads of departments. The first time I ran across him after graduating was on the battlefield of Spottsylvania, where, as brigadier-general, he commanded a division of colored troops in Burnside's corps; and those of us who saw his division at Petersburg witnessed a display of unexcelled gallantry. What a dream it would have been to the aristocratic Delafield, if some night in 1858 a spectral figure had announced that his dancing-

master, Ferrero, in less than four years would be a brigadier-general, commanding a division, and that the history of his division would be a beacon in that of the colored race! However this may be, Ferrero's instructions in dancing were diversifying, and contributed to the refining influences of West Point life; and if, with the proverbial heedlessness of youth, we treated him at times, in and out of the dancing-hall, with obvious indifference, on account of his calling, we may hope that in his old age he could forget it all in the satisfaction he must have had in contemplating his remarkable career and the services which he rendered to his adopted country.

In this connection, another figure comes looming up, perhaps because of its very contrast in station with that of a dancing-master: it is that of Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott of Virginia, born in 1786, and then in command of the army, with his headquarters at West Point. The old general made himself heard, considered, and felt throughout the country. He was over six feet, six inches tall, and in frame was simply colossal. It so happened that only the rail separated his pew in the chapel from the one which I occupied, —it was four or five pews back, on the right side facing the chancel, — and I felt like a pigmy when I stood beside him. The old fellow was devout; but it was said that whatsoever church he

attended, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, or Roman Catholic, he threw himself into the service with the same depth of reverence. Nevertheless he would sometimes swear like a pirate. Surely, I think, nature must have been in one of her royal moods at his birth, for there was magnificence in the dignity of his great, kingly, illuminated countenance. He filled my eyes, and I believe those of all the cadets, with a kind of reverential awe, for in his youth he had fought a duel, and he bore the scars of several deep wounds; moreover, as a background to his career, lay Lundy's Lane of the War of 1812, and the conquest of Mexico. He seemed an especially fitting figure at West Point, throwing, as he did, into its daily life some of the splendor that attaches to bravery and achievement. We were all proud of the old hero, and more than ever when, in the blaze of full uniform and with uncovered head, he stood at the left of the present King of England at the review given for him at West Point in 1860.

When my class graduated in 1862, I was one of a committee of two to ask the old general if he would give us his photograph for the class album; and I recall the gracious way in which he took my hand, holding it in both of his, and his kind, beneficent look as he asked me from what state I came. That was the last time I ever saw the

man whose towering personality threw its influence across the very entrance of my cadet life. He was in a way the culmination of the old army; he stood for its ideals of soldier and gentleman, and in great measure held to social standards and traditions that had prevailed from the time of the Revolution. With his career ended dueling and gaming, as engaged in by officers and men of station in civil life and the pride of connection with the best families which in the old days gave to the army undisputed leadership in social affairs. It marked, too, the close of the period of pomp. For the advance in science has converted the art of war, since his day, from displays of great courage on the open field into problems of finance, of commercial ascendency, and of the adaptation of scientific discoveries to the practical conduct of a battle. The old army, like the old knighthood, has passed away.

Chief among the impersonal influences that then brightened social life at West Point was its pervasive, childlike gayety. No face wore the harassing cares of business, there were no unapproachable lords of wealth and birth, no flaunting vulgarity, no time-servers or self-seekers, but everywhere genial good manners, cordiality, and the grace that comes from assured position. In fact there was light-heartedness everywhere, and happiness fairly beamed in the faces of the

sweethearts, the sisters and mothers of the cadets, who during the encampment flocked to West Point in great numbers. If these lines bring back to the mild eyes of any old lady some pleasant memories of those distant and happy days at West Point, I shall be glad.

Among the immediate personal influences which are, so to speak, the initial processes of the spirit of West Point for transforming raw cadets into officers, are the stimulating effects which come with wearing the uniform, with the mastery of one's motions in walking, marching, or entering the presence of a superior, with the constant regard for neatness and the habit of scrupulous truth-telling. Moreover, there is something uplifting in finding one's self among high-minded equals, and in realizing that in your superiors is lodged one of the most important functions of government,—the right and power of command. Then, too, the cadet begins to be conscious of the exclusive and national distinction of the Military Academy. Very soon, the monuments, the captured guns, and dreaming colors — which at the outset are mere interesting, historic relics — beckon to him; he feels that they have something to say. Before he leaves West Point they have given him their message, revealing from time to time to his vision that field from which lifts the radiant mist called glory.

Another potent influence is the scenery round West Point, which, as the world knows, has a sweet if not unrivaled charm. I have sometimes thought it conspired to bring to the intellectual vision and feeling of the cadet the spiritual significance of great virtues and great deeds; as, for instance, the unselfish sacrifice, for a principle, of all that life holds dear. I do not know how warmly, if at all, nature becomes interested in us poor mortals; but I have a feeling that a noble thought never rises in the heart, that an heroic deed is never performed, but that the hills with their laurel, the ridges with their strong-limbed oaks, feel a responsive thrill, and impart to the winds and streams their secret joy.

It would be difficult to convey a sense of the glamour investing the First Class generally, and above all the First Class officers, in the eyes of the new cadet. It is a result of long tradition, leaving nothing at the Military Academy more real than their precedence. Thus, let the number of years be what it may, the old graduate sees again in his reveries the cadet officers of his first encampment, and with as much vividness as on the wall before him he sees the sword he wore in the field, — the sword that talks to him of so many things. He sees the adjutant, the sergeant-major, the captains, and lieutenants arrayed for Retreat, their

PANORAMA F

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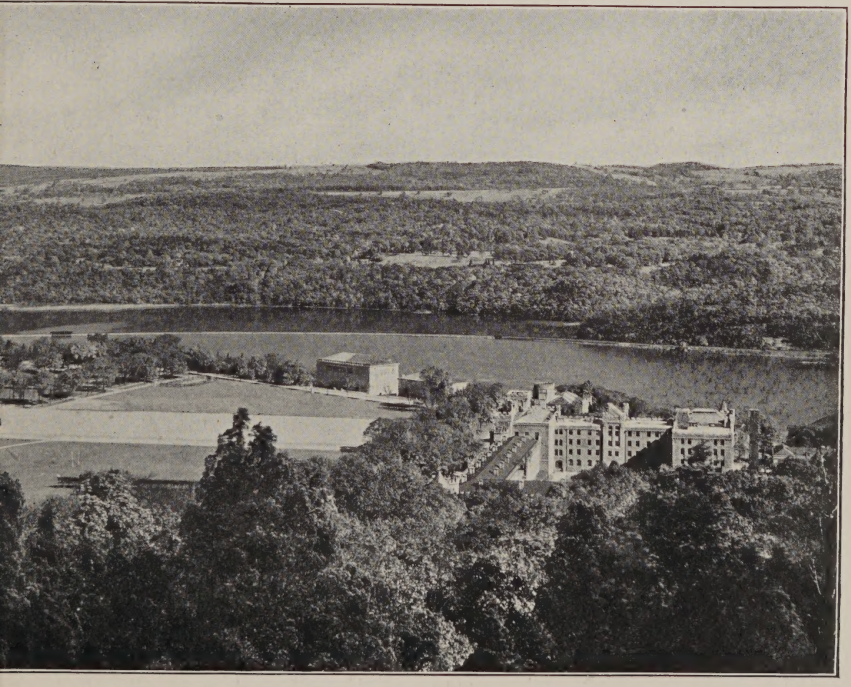


ORT PUTNAM

o the top, right)

erect and easy figures surmounted by broad and well-balanced shoulders, augmented in graceful effect by flowing silk sashes and hats proudly plumed. He sees them taking their places with the bearing of command, as the company falls in to the rapidly beaten call, expecting and alert to exact immediate promptness, and with courage to report the highest as well as the lowest for neglect or violation of duty.

In my own case (their heads are growing white and so is mine) I can see our first sergeant and hear his commands; he was General James H. Wilson, known as Harry Wilson (and what a heart he carries!), now of Wilmington, Delaware; he led the great Selma campaign, captured Jefferson Davis, and his whole career has been one of gallant and conspicuous service. And I can see his classmate, Horace Porter, our sergeant-major, whose name need only be mentioned to bring into view his distinguished relations, both historic and closely personal, with Grant. More than once I sat before the same camp-fire with him and Babcock and others of Grant's staff, at the General's headquarters, while the General himself sat in the circle and smoked and listened and talked, and never showed himself greater than in the simplicity that was always his on such occasions. I can see Porter taking his place beside Collins, the adjutant, — tall, fair-haired,

with rose-tinted cheek, pouting lips, and mild eyes, — Collins, whose life was so pathetically tragic that the bare mention of his name throws a shadow across this page like that of a summer cloud dragging silently across a field strewn with sheaves. I can see, too, the lieutenant of my company, the late General Joseph Wheeler, whose clay only a few months ago was borne in a spirit almost of triumph to its resting-place at Arlington, — he who led the Confederate cavalry so bravely, and who, when the Spanish War broke out, burst from the ashes of the Confederacy and once more took his place under the colors he marched with as a boy at West Point. I have often wondered whether there ever was deeper joy than that of Wheeler, Rosser, and Fitz Lee, when once more they put on the blue uniform and drew their swords for their united country.

I can see also the dark-eyed, stern, dignified Ramseur of North Carolina, who lost his life at Cedar Creek commanding a division in Early's corps. It was his fate to fall in the Confederate service, but he fell a Christian and a gentleman. There was an incident connected with his last hours that had a close relation with West Point, for when in the darkness our cavalry charged the broken and fleeing remnants of his division, Custer, who was in the midst, heard one of his

troopers who had seized the horses ask the driver whom he had in his ambulance.

In a weak, husky voice he heard Ramseur say, "Do not tell him."

Whereupon Custer, who recognized the voice he had so often heard at West Point, exclaimed, "Is that you, Ramseur?" and had him taken to Sheridan's headquarters, where his old friends, Merritt and Custer and the gallant Pennington, gathered around him and showed him every tenderness to the last. He died about ten o'clock the following day.

The Merritt I have just mentioned is Major-General Merritt, one of Sheridan's great cavalry leaders, and with Griffin of the West Point battery, was selected to parole Lee's army at Appomattox. A classmate of Porter, Wilson, and Bowen, he was a sergeant in my first camp, and had, I think, more of the sunshine of youth in his fair, open face and clear blue eyes than any other cadet in the corps. I can hear his fine tenor voice now, rising high and sweet over the group that used to meet at the head of the company street and sing, in the evening. While I was carrying a dispatch to him at Todd's Tavern during the Wilderness campaign, an incident occurred that made a deep impression on me. Just before I reached Merritt, who was on the line, a riderless horse dashed back through the woods,

coming almost squarely into collision with mine, — as it was, the saddle struck my left knee a severe blow. Soon there followed three or four men carrying an officer with the cape of his blue overcoat thrown over his face. I asked who it was; they told me it was Ash, of the cavalry, who had just been killed. He was about my own age, a very brave officer, and I knew him right well.

There is one other officer of the battalion whose resolute face, voice, and manner come into view with Wilson's and Porter's and Ramseur's; and some of the old awe with which I viewed him in 1858 again invests his image as it emerges from the grove of memory. It is Ben Hardin from Illinois, a son of the Colonel Hardin who fell at Buena Vista; and as Hardin was appointed while Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War, I have no doubt his name recalled his honored father to the distinguished secretary; for on that field the President of the Confederacy, leading the 1st Mississippi with great bravery, was severely wounded. Had I been called on to select from all his class the man likely to reach the highest honors as a soldier, I should certainly have chosen Hardin. Brevetted four or five times, he was mustered out a general at the close of the war. I remember the day when the news came to Meade's headquarters that he had been severely wounded in an encounter with guerillas. At close range they shot

LIBRARY

him, causing the loss of his left arm near the shoulder. When I was on the Board of Visitors in 1882, he came to West Point, and together we walked to Fort Putnam, and to that beautiful spot where so many of the friends of our youth were lying, the West Point Cemetery. I discovered then, what I had not fully perceived as a cadet, the simplicity, the modesty, and the natural sweetness of his nature.

There were in the battalion many other upperclass men to whom I might refer, who, as officers or privates, made fine records; but whatever station they reached, it is doubtful if they were ever dignified by a consideration so respectful as that from the new cadet in his first camp. I have called it glamour; but in a sense it was a reality, and a potent one, toward accomplishing the aims of West Point. It is true also that the commandant and superintendent were much greater relatively in the eyes of the cadets than were the professors. Grant says in this connection, referring to the visit of Martin Van Buren, then President, to West Point, "He did not impress me with the awe which Scott had inspired. In fact, I regarded General Scott and Captain C. F. Smith, the commandant of the cadets, as the two men most to be envied in the nation."

And in my eyes Hardee, our commandant, was a greater man than any one of the professors,

greater even than Jefferson Davis, then in the Senate, as I saw them walking side by side, under the elms mottling green and gold, in the autumn of 1860. I was mortally afraid of Hardee. The first time he entered my room, accompanied by the late Major-General A. McD. McCook, at Sunday morning inspection a few days after I reported, he came close up, his sword under his left arm, and bored his big gray eyes into me and asked my name.

"Schaff," I answered mildly.

"No, it is n't!" exclaimed McCook. "His name's 'Shoaff.' I know the 'Shoaffs' of Virginia well."

And from that time on I was called "Old Shoaff" by about half my class.

McCook had a classmate, John T. Shaaff, who joined the Confederacy, and spelled his name as mine is spelled in some of the old German prayer-books of our family.

Grant in his memoirs, alluding to his first encampment, says, "The encampment which preceded the commencement of academic studies was very wearisome and uninteresting. When the 28th of August came — the date for breaking up camp and going into barracks — I felt as though I had been at West Point always."

I think that in the main General Grant's ex-

perience in his first camp is that of almost every cadet. There is no doubt of its wearisomeness, or that it seems without end; but there are incidents connected with it, and some of them common to all the experiences that come after it, which leave lasting impressions. They vary in character; some are trivial, some have relation to the buildings and batteries, others to the subtlest of the parts which nature plays in the cadet's education. Though the most memorable are associated with sentry duty, in my own case, I think, the most vivid was made by the library. I had never seen a public library, much less entered one and felt its presence; so that there comes back to me now that mystical address of books in their lofty silence as I wandered in for the first time one quiet, languid midsummer afternoon. It is not in reality a very large library, — at that time it had only about twenty thousand volumes, — and all the books were on shelves against the wall, some thirty odd feet high. But it looked vast to me as I entered it.

The rather tall librarian was an old soldier, a German by the name of Fries, with flaming red cheeks, a little brown silky hair trained from his temples up over his well-crowned head, and a voice and a manner that was sweetness and modesty itself. Over his desk was a full-length portrait of President James Monroe in Continental

uniform, his white trousers lighting up the field of the painting. The old librarian came to me as I stood looking around, and asked what book I would like to see. I felt that I ought to ask for something, and having heard from some source (perhaps from a notice in the "Religious Telescope," our family paper) of "Lynch's Expedition to the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan," I asked for that. I wonder if its pages have been opened from that day to this.

Later, I browsed around. I used to take my seat in one of the windows, and I know of no place where a book can be read under more favorable conditions for author or reader. The light steals in so softly, the quiet is so deep, broken only now and then by the mellow notes of a bugle, or at intervals by a vireo's limpid, short warble in the trees outside. To be sure, if the eye lifts from the page it falls on a wooing landscape; but the effect is to elevate and dignify the book in one's hand when the eye comes back to it. There is no question in my mind that the library in my day had too little weight; no appeal was made to its inspiration in official or in private social life, and thus the graduates were deprived of that final satisfaction which comes and comes only from the field of literature. I have reason to believe that under the present librarian, Doctor Holden, the

INTERIOR OF LIBRARY, LOOKING NORTHEAST

well-known scientist and scholar, a change is being wrought.

There are some very amusing and some very beautifully impressive circumstances about sentinel's duty at West Point. The amusing things come from the mighty seriousness and awe that later seem so funny — the low tones in which the orders are communicated to the new cadet, the whispered countersign, what he must do if an enemy should approach, and finally the warning that death is the penalty if caught asleep.

The first tour I made was on a very murky black night, and when the corporal gave me the countersign, "Quatre Bras," which he pronounced rapidly and in very low tones, I was in difficulty; not knowing any French, and never having heard of the celebrated battle. I asked him to spell it. He rattled it off and marched away. In my ear it did not at all spell the words he had pronounced. I walked faithfully back and forth over my post, wondering what the word was.

After a while along came the sergeant of the guard, General John M. Wilson, lately a glowing satellite in the planetary system of Washington life, who, on or off duty had an air that was fiercely military. Upon my demanding the countersign, he answered it in approved French.

Said I, "Spell it"; and, recruit-like, came to charge bayonets.

He took that as almost an affront, and I am surprised that it did not bring on a fatal attack of military vertigo; but he complied with the sentinel's request. Then, approaching, he asked me my orders, with overpowering importance, as if it depended on him and me whether the earth was to continue in its orbit that night.

That summer Donati's comet appeared, and night after night streamed broadly in the northern heavens. Every cadet will remember the night boat from New York; it passed about half-past nine, and with its numerous lights gleaming far down below was a gay and very pretty sight. He will remember also the large tows, with little, feeble, twinkling lights on the low canal boats; the dull splash of leaping sturgeon when all was still in the dead of night; and the propellers chugging on their way to New York, carrying live stock, from which from time to time would come a long, deep low, or a calf's bleating anguish; and the frail quivering voice of the screech owl that was said to nest in the ruins of old Fort Putnam.

To every feature in the solemn progress of the night and the brightness of the coming day, the sentinel walking his post is a witness: the moonlight lying wan on the steps of the chapel; the clock in the tower striking the deep hours; the flushing of the dawn; the fog that has lain on

the river lifting and moving off; and finally the note of the reveille at the soldiers' barracks, and the appearance of the soldiers at the morning gun, the corporal standing with the colors in his hand till the sun clears the east, when the gun fires, and the colors ascend lovingly to the head of the mast.

VI

IN THE CLASSROOM

Upon going into barracks after breaking camp on the 28th of August, I was assigned to a room in the cockloft of the Fourth Division, overlooking the area. I do not recall having spoken to my roommate during the camp. He was from Gloucester, Massachusetts, and pored lovingly over the "Cape Ann Breeze," which, sprinkled with little woodcuts of ships, reported the going and coming of the fishing fleet, and all the home news of the old, redolent, seafaring port. He was small, broad-shouldered and sturdy, with rather pensive blue eyes and raven black hair, scrupulously neat, and took naturally to what is comprehended in the term "military." At Gettysburg it was his fortune to command the section of artillery which opened that great battle; and visitors to the field have the positions of his guns pointed out as one of the historic spots. John H. Calef was his name, and our friendship is still green.

Across the hall lived Jasper Myers of Indiana, one of the mildest, most naturally refined, and gentlest of men. He wore a great beard on his arrival at West Point, and Custer in his first interview maintained that he ought to go right back home and send his son, — he evidently had

made a mistake, he said; it was his boy that the government meant should have the appointment and not the old man. Myers appreciated the fun, and met the joke with a spontaneous laugh and unconscious, happy eyes. He was a very genuine, true man, who brought little that added to the superficial West Point, but much to the ideal West Point; for surely it counts for something when a cadet joins her ranks bringing with him an honor as unclouded and a vision as clear as her own of what is high and modest and manly. That is what Myers brought; the graft had the same sap and blossom as the tree itself. His room-mate was a little imp from Louisiana, with skye-terrier yellow hair; he bore a fine name, and could speak French fluently, but spent about every waking hour in studying how he could make a nuisance of himself generally. To the comfort of everybody on our floor he was found deficient at the January examinations and thrown overboard.

An eager soberness settled in the faces of all our class as we set off on the academic course; for the very air was pervaded with the inexorableness of the standards in all the departments, especially in that of mathematics. It was in this department that the ground was strewn, so to speak, with the bones of victims. At its head

was Professor Albert E. Church, a short, stocky, brown-eyed, broad-faced man, with a complaining voice. He was almost bald and had the habit of carrying his head bowed, eyes on the ground, and hands clasped behind him under the tails of his deep blue dress-coat, which was ornamented with brass buttons. He had graduated at the head of his class, and was the author of the leading works studied in his department. Jefferson Davis was a classmate of his, and Robert E. Lee was in the next class below them, that of 1829. Except Mahan's, there never was a colder eye or manner than Professor Church's. Like Mahan, professor of engineering, civil and military, he always impressed me as an old mathematical cinder, bereft of all natural feeling. But on the terrible day the news of the defeat at Bull Run reached the Point, I saw that there was another side; the poor old fellow's face was shrouded with deep distress.

We began our recitations with Lieutenant Adam Slemmer, one of Professor Church's assistants. He was a solemn, hollow-eyed, spare man, wore glasses, and looked at us, standing there before him in the middle of the floor reciting, as if he were studying and trying to interpret an omen. No one ever credited him with being a hero, so mild and meditative was his manner; but at the breaking-out of the war a

few years afterward, he held Fort Pickens with the greatest bravery, receiving the highest praise, and was made a brigadier-general of volunteers.

In a few weeks, under the operation of a sifting process, we rapidly changed places in class standing, some going up and some down in our sections, according to Professor Church's judgment — which was rarely in error — as to ability. This threw me under the instruction of Major-General Alexander S. Webb, who is now living in New York after a most brilliant career, covering not only that of a soldier, but also that of a scholar at the head of the College of the City of New York. He was nearly six feet tall, of soldierly bearing, spare and rather sallow, with deep gray, open, fearless eyes, and straight, very black hair. His voice was rich, strong, and cultivated, and he had a natural and warm smile. Day after day I sat on the bench in his presence, and I recall his voice and manner with the greatest distinctness; they marked him for a gentleman through and through.

It was his division that Pickett struck at Gettysburg, and it was to him that Cushing addressed his last words. It was he who at that very critical moment swung Norman Hall's brigade into the storm, striking the wavering Confederate column in flank at close range. Hall was a first class man my first year, a mature, scholarly-

looking man, with a large, broad, clear forehead, chestnut hair, and quiet, unassertive manner. General Webb was Meade's chief of staff at the close of the war, with the rank of major-general. He represented the best blood of the country, and he represented it well, and it has always been a source of gratification and pride to remember that for nearly two years he was my instructor.

My other instructor in pure mathematics was Major-General O. O. Howard, probably known more widely among the church-going people of our country than any officer of his time. His head is now almost snowy white, and his armless sleeve tells its story; yet when I saw him last there was the same mild, deeply sincere, country-bred simplicity in his face that it wore when, so many years ago, I sat on the bench or stood before him in the section room. His voice too had barely changed at all; it was still pitched in the same mellow, clerical key, and accompanied, when humorous in its vein, with the same boyish smile in his earnest blue eyes, — eyes always filled with that light of another and a holier land, the fair land of the Christian's gaze. He organized among the cadets what was known as "Howard's little prayer-meeting," which met weekly, between supper and call to quarters during the winter months, in a vacant room on the third floor of the "Angle."

I heard of this prayer-meeting through Elijah Henry Holton of Kentucky, of the class above me, and at his invitation attended its meetings. There never were more than ten or fifteen present, as I remember. General Howard conducted the services, which consisted of a hymn, a selection from the Bible, and a prayer, led by the General himself and at times by cadets, all kneeling. Among the latter were Ramseur of North Carolina, whom I have already mentioned; Benjamin of New York, who later was the commander of Benjamin's Battery of heroic record, and son-in-law of Hamilton Fish; Moses White of Mississippi, a black-eyed, fine-spirited man, who graduated in 1859, and rendered great service to the Confederacy; and little Edmund Kirby, of Kirby's Battery, who was mortally wounded at Chancellorsville. I heard each of them lead in prayer with their hands palm to palm in deep reverence; and I am sure that when death came to Ramseur and Kirby it found their hearts pillowed on the Bible. Religion has worn many beautiful garbs, yet those few young men in cadet gray, who had the courage to kneel and humbly make their prayer right out of the heart, for help to meet the duties of life, in memory stand apart, encompassed with a heavenly light.

Kirby was a little fellow, two classes ahead of mine, and was appointed at large by President

Pierce. On reporting to General Hooker, a few days before the battle of Chancellorsville, I went from camp to camp and battery to battery visiting my West Point friends, and among others Dimick and Kirby. The former was a joyous-hearted man. He was mortally wounded, and died, I believe, on the field. Kirby was wounded during the frightful attack on the day following the mortal wounding of Stonewall Jackson. As soon as our defeated army recrossed the Rappahannock, I went back, accompanying my immediate commanding officer, Lieutenant John R. Edie of Kirby's class, to the ordnance depot at Acquia Creek, and during the afternoon a dispatch was received saying that Kirby was on the train, and that we must look out for him. It was after dark when the train, made up wholly of freight cars and filled with wounded, pulled in.

Edie and I with a lantern went from car to car — there were no lights in them — calling, "Kirby!"

At last, "Here I am, John," he answered cheerily.

We helped him out and carried him to our quarters and laid him on Edie's bed. He was wounded just above the knee, and apparently the ball had gone in and out through his leg, but had not broken a bone. We sat beside him

and talked and laughed over his prospective furlough, and all of us were happy.

The next morning we put him aboard the boat and bade him good-by, thinking we soon should meet again. But in a few days we heard that he was not doing well; and shortly after, he died. It was found on amputating his leg that he had been hit simultaneously (his battery was under fire from several directions) by two bullets, one in front and the other almost directly in the back of his leg, both lodging in the bone.

When the surgeon told him that life was about over, his disappointment was so great that tears broke from his open, bold eyes; for he felt that he was so young, and that he was to leave his widowed mother and family without much means. Some one carried the news to Mr. Lincoln, who, having learned that he had sustained himself gallantly and conspicuously in all the battles of the Army of the Potomac, visited him in the hospital and soothed the boy's last hours by making him a brigadier-general. And now, as I see him across the years on his bended knees, with hands clasped before him and leading in prayer, I am led to say that, wherever the throne of God may be, I cannot but believe that little Kirby is not far away from it.

He was only twenty-three, — and that was Dimick's age. Oh, Chancellorsville! while the

star of Stonewall Jackson burns, the world will know of you; but *I* never see your name without seeing once more the faces of boys of twenty-three, and my affection runs to meet them.

One night, the venerable Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio was present at the prayer-meeting, and after leading in prayer, he told us of the days of 1825, when he was the chaplain and professor of ethics at West Point; of how he interested Bishop Polk, then a cadet, in religion, — the bishop who later was to lay aside his robes and put on the gray uniform of the Confederacy, and in its service to fall a lieutenant-general at Pine Mountain, Georgia. He spoke to us warmly also of how naturally and how rationally the life of a soldier and that of a Christian harmonized. It was a fine talk from a majestic old man.

Of that little group that used to gather at the prayer-meeting, but few are alive now. What it accomplished in the lives of living or dead may never be known; but surely it played a part, and, as I think, a divine part, in the midst of West Point life. Whether or not religion, as an instinct, be a lower or a higher thing than absolute knowledge based on determined properties of matter, I cannot conceive a greater splendor for mortals than a union of the transparency of the gentleman with the humility and trust of the Christian.

And, moreover, I cannot conceive a national institution of learning whose ideals are truth and honor and courage, moving on to its aims without rising into those higher levels where imagination and sentiment have their eternal empire.

For the first two years our instructors in English studies under Professor French were Lieutenant Symonds and Lieutenant John Greble. The former was a small, plump man, with sparkling blue eyes, short and snappy in speech. When I was on the Board of Visitors, he returned to me with a very friendly smile the compositions I had written. I am free to say that, as I glanced them over, I heartily wished that he had burned every one of them.

Lieutenant John Greble, who was the professor's son-in-law, and for whom Fort Greble is named, was a very gentle and refined man of medium height. His forehead, defined by dark, silky hair, was the conspicuous feature of his face, in which nature had written plainly her autograph of gentleman. He was killed at Big Bethel, the first of the officers whom we knew, to lose his life; and he was mourned by us all. For although there were but few of the corps who had any acquaintance with the professors' families, yet there were ties binding us to each and all of them.

The course in English at West Point at that time (and I think it is so now) was notoriously held of minor importance by the Academic Board. While pure mathematics and engineering were rated as 3, English was rated as 1. Indeed, it was down on the level of tactics, which are mere memorizing exercises for the mind.

It is easy for every graduate to see the grounds for Jefferson Davis's recommendation of a five years' course; he felt the inadequacy of the course in literature at that period, — and every graduate feels it is so now — and he thought that he could remedy it by adding the fifth year. But so well entrenched was the theory that those powers of mind which are called into play in carrying on war can be trained to the highest efficiency by mathematics, and mathematics alone, and possibly this is so, the experiment of introducing literature met with no encouragement, and after languishing a few years was dropped.

The course grew out of the fact that at the time of the founding of West Point a knowledge of military engineering was rare, if not wholly wanting, in our army; and for that reason, foreign officers, French, German, and Poles, had to be employed. But comparison of the working drawings of Vauban's Front, the standard of the old-time fortress, with those of modern works is all that is needed to realize the decline in the im-

portance of military engineering. It is true that the great advance in gun construction, and in applied science for their effective use, makes a much greater demand for scientific knowledge than formerly existed. But to supply this knowledge is the basis and aim of all technical schools; and, besides, it has become a necessary and well-established feature of all large steel and shipbuilding works. However great may hitherto have been the dependence of the government on its graduates at West Point for the proper adaptation of scientific knowledge to its defense, under present conditions that dependence must be much less. Therefore a change giving the graduate wider knowledge in the suggestive fields of history and literature might well be considered.

But weigh the course as you may, — and certainly her graduates have worthily met the mighty problems of war, — this must be said: West Point is a great character-builder, perhaps the greatest among our institutions of learning. The habit of truth-telling, the virtue of absolute honesty, the ready and loyal obedience to authority, the display of courage, — that virtue called regal, — to establish these elements of character, she labors without ceasing. The primary agency in accomplishing her ends is, and has been, the tone of the corps of cadets.

This tone, the very life and breath of the Mili-

tary Academy, tracks back to a fine source, to the character of Washington and the best society at the time of the Revolution, for, since the day when he had his headquarters at West Point, it has been exclusively a military post, completely isolated from the social ferment and adventitious standards of commerce and trade. His standards of private and official life, and those of the officers and the gentlemen of his day, were the standards of his immediate successors, who, in turn, transmitted them unimpaired to those who came after. Moreover, at his suggestion, West Point as an institution of learning came into being; and its foundations were laid on the solid virtues of his example. And thus to him and to the high-minded men of his day, the tone of the corps of cadets for truth-telling, honesty, obedience to authority, and the considerate bearing of the gentleman, may fairly well be traced.

It is significant that this spirit exists entirely disconnected from the official and social life of the officers and instructors. There is no hierarchy or aristocracy within or without the battalion charged with the maintenance of its standards, or with their inculcation; there are no ceremonies or stage effects directed toward its suggestion or adornment; cadets do not discuss it or refer to it, but it is as much part of their life as the air they breathe. Approached from any direction, it

has presented the same uplifting aspect; or tested at any period, let the parties to the test be powerful or weak, it has presented the same constant and admirable elements, and has come very near being the realization of an ideal. It offers to the æsthetic sense, overshadowed as the latter is by the gallant death of so many of the graduates in the very spring of life, that symbolism of youth and health and unconscious mission, that revelation of honor and truth and personal courage, which has spread the wings of the imagination in all ages.

VII

CADET ARISTOCRACY

It was not until the time of the war between the states that the present system of appointment by competitive examination came into vogue, — the result of the dodging of responsibility by the members of Congress, whose right it is to nominate for their districts cadets at West Point and Annapolis. Before this change of system the corps of cadets came nearer to being an aristocracy than any rank in government or society. Its classes had been chosen from the best families, — families which had made their mark in public service, in education, in the church, or in business. Moreover, like flowers under an oak, its members were a fostered part of the government itself, enjoying a life tenure of their position, and above all, in the sentiment of the people, consecrated to the defense of the rights and the honor of the country. Thus, without the prescriptive authority of aristocracy, it stood on one of its enviable and conceded eminences.

Besides, it had the glamour of youth, youth that between duty, life, or death would not deign to falsify or to hesitate. It is easy, therefore, to see how, like all things that satisfy the ideal, it lay in the hearts of the people; and also how its traditions ran from one year into another, making

their appeal to its members for what was pure and manly and true. I do not wish to convey the impression that the corps of cadets was a body of young saints. Its language at times was not at all saintly; but there was no pretense of holiness, and man for man, they were no better and no worse than the young men of like age at any college.

In my day (and I have no doubt it is so now) the truth had to be told, let the consequences be what they might to one's self or to one's best friend. But it went farther than this. Let a man even shade the truth at a recitation or in reference to any transaction that would favorably affect his class standing, and he soon felt the condemnation of his fellows, — not in a temporary chill in his personal relations with them, but one that lasted while he was in the corps. For what is known there as "boot-licking" of older classmen or instructors there was no mercy.

We had a Washington directly from the great Washington family of Virginia; a Buchanan, the nephew of the President; an Anderson and a Jones, W. G., representing the Longworth and Anderson families of Ohio and Kentucky; a Breckinridge, son of the patriot, Robert J., and a cousin of John C., vice-president and major-general in the Confederacy; representatives of the Huger and Mordecai families of South Caro-

lina; a Du Pont from Delaware, and a Hasbrouck from New York, and a Vanderbilt, son of the founder of the family, — a mighty good athlete and a mighty dull scholar, — but they stood on exactly the same level as the humblest born; and, had any cadet shown the least acknowledgment of their social superiority, he would have met the scorn of the entire battalion. It was a pure, self-respecting democracy.

But, like all youth, the corps, in clinging to its standards, sometimes made grievous mistakes. A touching instance was that of a Massachusetts man of my class, who by mistake took a Southerner's shoes instead of his own from the bootblack's, where our extra pairs were left to be blacked. Unfortunately he did not discover the mistake himself, and was charged openly by the Southerner with intending to steal the pair of shoes. Because he did not resent the charge, although he pledged his honor that it was a mistake he was branded with cowardice, and about everybody "cut" him. But I felt that he was innocent and wronged. I visited him in his exile and walked with him in release from quarters; he told me of his family, and I knew how his heart beat. Well, in the Shenandoah Valley he was most seriously wounded, charging at the very head of his squadron; was brevetted for gallant and meritorious conduct, and died within a few years.

I blame not my impulsive friends, — we are all human; but I trust that henceforth no cadet will ever have to bear so unjust a burden. His life discloses the undercurrents of fate and has its misting shadow of pathos; but, like the heaven-trusting spire of a country church among pastured fields, his record pierces the sullen sky of his cadet life.

The first gentleman, the Saviour of the World, said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Still I sometimes wonder if it would not have been better for this Northern man to have met the Southerner on the spot, with his chair or anything else he could lay his hand on. For he, like too many of our Congressmen and Northern men, both of whom stood insults, led the South to believe that the entire North was lacking in courage, and it took Gettysburg and the Wilderness and Chickamauga to prove to them their fatal error.

While it was assumed that no one would submit to humiliation or unjust discrimination in being reported, yet that was a purely personal matter, and, if not resented, passed without comment. But let there be a manifestation of the "cock of the walk" spirit by any one, and he would soon find some one ready to cut his comb for him; and let there be any disparity in size, indignation was aroused at once, and volunteers

of equal size with the offender were ready to take the place of the smaller or the weaker.

I had a personal experience that illustrated it well. Just before the inauguration of Lincoln, the war spirit was flaming, and the whole corps was in a feverish, bristling state. Four or five of us gathered in a room in the 8th Division where some one had the "New York Herald" and was reading aloud what took place in Congress. The reader began to read what Ben Wade, Senator from my State of Ohio, had said, when a Southerner — several classes above me — over six feet tall, very powerful, and notorious both for his battles and, rightfully or wrongfully, for a very aggressive manner, remarked sneeringly, "Oh! — Ben Wade! don't read what *he* says."

Whereupon some pretty violent language was interchanged between him and me, although my people were all Democrats and our sympathies or views were not at all in agreement with Mr. Wade's. My size alone saved me from a beating at the instant, and fortunately Bentz's bugle calling for recitation broke up the ill-natured party. On my return from recitation, Custer and "Deacon" Elbert of Iowa, who had heard about the row, — and were about the size of the Southerner, — met me in the area and said, "If he lays a hand on you, Morris, we 'll maul the earth with him."

NORTHWEST ANGLE OF THE 1850 BARRACKS

It may be asked what a man who from his size belonged in "B" Company was doing in the 8th Division among the tall men of "D" Company. It came about in this way: In my second year, owing to an increase in the size of the battalion, the overflow of my company, "B," and the various other companies, had to room in what was called the "Angle," which threw me with John Asbury West, of Georgia, of "D" Company. West and I became very close friends, and that we might continue to room together, just before the battalion was formed, in 1860, at the close of the encampment for division into companies, he suggested that I stuff some paper in my shoes to lift me up into the flank companies. Thereupon we inlaid a good share of a "New York Herald" in each shoe, lowered my trousers to the extreme limit to hide my heels, and, to my heart's delight, the result was, that in counting off the battalion, I fell just inside of "D" Company. And on that bit of paper in my shoes all my life has hinged; for, had I stayed with the studious "B" Company, I should in all probability have graduated in the engineers, and the stream of my life would have run through different fields. I was not smart enough to keep up in my studies and at the same time to visit with Custer, to my heart's content, "Jim" Parker, and the crowd generally in "D" Company, most of

whom were from the South and West, and cared mighty little as to where they stood in the class. The number of my demerit marks shows that in my new surroundings I was foolishly heedless, to say the least.

From time to time I shall mention Custer. His fame needs no word from me,—his name is in every history of the war,—but in connection with our intercourse at West Point that was so free and unstudied I would like to refer to his nature, so full of those streams that rise, so to speak, among the high hills of our being. I have in mind his joyousness, his attachment to the friends of his youth, and his never-ending delight in talking about his old home — and it suggests the inquiry, may it not be possible that the sense of immortality is not vouchsafed to man alone? May not the old home, with its garden, its fields with their flocks, their lilies, and their blading corn, and even the little brooks, all have their dream of immortality too? And I wonder if they do not find it in a boy's memory.

I think I should fail utterly of lifting these articles to their proper level if I did not at least try to penetrate that enticing veil which God has hung over the spiritual significance of everything in this life.

I have intimated more than once that there are

two West Points: the real West Point, and that overarching spiritual West Point, in whose sky float all of her ideals. On several occasions I have referred also to the tone of the corps of cadets and to the mystical influences of scenery, monuments, colors, batteries, and guns, in a cadet's education. In addition to these influences, and coöperating with them, I have often wondered what effect the splendid records of some of the officers over us had upon our young minds.

For instance, there was Hartsuff. He was our instructor in light artillery, and in command of Company "A" of the battalion, and later a major-general of volunteers. He was large, and sullen in appearance, but, as I discovered after the war, a most genial, sunny-hearted man. I think his record is worth telling. Just a short while before reporting for duty at the Academy, he had been wounded in an Indian ambush in Florida, and here is the account of it in Cullum's "Biographical Register of West Point."

"Under such cover as his wagon afforded," so says the "Register," "the brave lieutenant fought until so badly crippled himself by two wounds that he was unable to use a weapon, when, after having shot two Indians with his own pistol, he effected his escape almost miraculously by dragging himself through the high grass into a pond and sinking his body out of sight in the water.

The Indians, perhaps awed by his gallantry and the mystery of his disappearance, quickly left the field with the plunder they had acquired. Refreshed by his immersion in the pond, but driven from it in about three hours by the alligators attracted by his blood, he began what turned out to be one of the most wonderful feats on record. It was Thursday morning. The nearest white man was at the fort, fifty-five miles distant. Lieutenant Hartsuff, binding and from time to time rebinding his own wounds as best he could, compelled to lie most of the time on his back, blistered by the hot sun and lacerated by thorns and briers, concealing himself during the day, and dragging his suffering body inch by inch during the night, remained until Saturday night continuously without food and without water, from the time he left the pond where he first took refuge. He was then found by the troops sent out in search of him, fifteen miles from the place of attack, exhausted, with his name and a brief account of the disaster written on a small piece of paper with his own blood, pinned on his wounded breast."

Just after he was relieved from duty at the Point in 1859, we heard of his heroic conduct in the celebrated wreck of the Lady Elgin, that went down one stormy night on Lake Michigan. Hartsuff, so it was reported, provided the women with

life-preservers and was among the last to leave the wreck. He swam until he found a bale of hay, and hearing the cry of a woman, brought her to the bale, and after spending eleven hours in the water was rescued. Only a fifth of all on board were saved.

With men about us with courage and manliness like this, and not one of them over twenty-six years old, is it not easy to imagine their influence on our growing ideals? Is it any wonder that the boys who day after day saw them through the glamour of their devotion to duty, met their own obligations when the time came with like heroism? Is it any wonder that Cushing and Kirby and O'Rorke and Marsh, and the sweet, lovable Sanderson of my class, who, after falling mortally wounded between his pieces at the battle of Pleasant Hill, lay on the ground still giving his commands, while his blood was pouring out, carrying voice and life with it, — is it any wonder that he and they met death with the bird singing in their breasts? Is it any wonder that Parsons of Parsons's Battery, who was brevetted over and over again for gallantry, and who after the war became an Episcopal clergyman, and was at Memphis when the yellow fever broke out, stayed with his little flock day and night, till he fell a victim?

VIII

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

THE happiest six months of my cadet life were those that followed my entrance into D Company at the opening of my second-class year, September, 1860. This period had its dawn when, like silent, migratory herons, our successors, the new cadets, began to appear. And, by the way, the effect of their coming was phenomenal. I remember a particular example in the case of "Rube" Ross of my class, a little, serious, broad-shouldered Tennesseean, with bristling, coarse, sandy hair and rather dead blue eyes and low wrinkled forehead; his name was Ebenezer McEwen, but we always called him "Rube." When the news reached him that the first new cadet had arrived he clapped on his cap and started downstairs on the run, exclaiming, "Hurrah for hell! Hurrah for hell!" I never could see the connection of ideas in "Rube's" mind, although we all shared his elation. When the war came on he went with his State, and I never knew what became of him.

Our abilities had been measured against the requirements of the course, and all of us above the foot of the class knew that if we applied ourselves and behaved ourselves we could graduate. In studies we had emerged from the

perpetual gloom of pure mathematics into the awing yet exalting suggestions of the distant, eternal abodes of space and the duration of time which are unfolded to the mind by astronomy and geology. I had made friends; I experienced the joy and gladness of manifested friendship on their part, and on the part of some of those immediately around me in the higher classes. Above all, I was happy in my roommate, the impulsive, generous, pure-minded, and boyishly ingenuous John Asbury West, of Madison, Georgia.

Everything seemed to conspire to gladden the heart. The course in mechanics and philosophy, although it had the repute of being the most crucial of all, had some way or other proved an easy march to me, — in fact, I had moved up to the third place in it. Moreover, all of us had been pleased with the discovery that beneath the professor's nervous, twitching manner, his lean, wrinkled, and premonitory face, heavy, bristling eyebrows, and wildly erect, touzling gray hair, lay broad fields of kindness and sympathy. As for Kendrick, professor of geology, and Benton, instructor of ordnance, they displayed such uniform and natural urbanity as gave their recitation-rooms the air of a welcoming presence. Benton's mild, unconscious blue eye came near being the "single" eye referred to in

the Sermon on the Mount. Thus it was that in my academic life the autumn of 1860 was like coming out from a deeply shadowed and, in spots, corduroyed road, upon an open ridge of primeval oak-trees, the sward under them embroidered here and there with golden sunshine, and the sky over them with dreaming clouds.

Its most memorable event was the visit of the Prince of Wales, now King of England. He and his brilliant suite, at the head of which was the Duke of Newcastle, came up from New York on the revenue cutter, Harriet Lane. This vessel, named for the stately and distinguished niece of President Buchanan, was captured by the Confederates in the harbor of Galveston a few years later. The royal party arrived at the wharf about 3 P. M. and was met by the adjutant. Mounted on horses especially provided for the occasion, the Prince and his party were escorted to Colonel Delafield's quarters by the detachment of regular dragoons on duty at the Post. On reaching the Plain a national salute was fired from Battery Knox, the hills echoing grandly with each discharge. The battalion of cadets was drawn up in line under the elms in front of the barracks, and as Captain Charles W. Field — a typical cavalry officer of the day, six feet, three inches tall, with long, dark chestnut hair, and sweeping moustache — rode by at the head of the escort,

accompanied by Lieutenant Robert Williams of Virginia, later Colonel of the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry during the war, we felt very proud of them both. They rode superbly, and looked every inch the soldier. The Prince, well mounted, carried his silk hat in his hand, and acknowledged the salute gracefully as he passed the colors. After the ranks had been opened for review by Reynolds, then commandant, and who was killed less than three years later, at Gettysburg, and after the officers and colors had moved to the front, His Royal Highness set out for the right of the line, the band playing "God Save the Queen," and later, as he passed down the line, the "Flower of Edinburgh." We were very proud of General Scott as he towered uncovered, in full uniform, at the side of the blond-haired boy, while we marched in review. The following day the Prince came into our recitation room, and, as Chaffee was reciting, he tarried till he was done. Meanwhile I had viewed him at close range, for I sat within a few feet of him. He had his mother's conspicuous, large, open, royalty-asserting blue eyes, he was of medium height, and had the English hue of health in his face.

There was another distinguished personage at West Point that autumn, one who has filled more shining pages of the world's history than the Prince of Wales, — Jefferson Davis. He was

there off and on throughout the summer, with a sub-committee of the Senate to report on the course of instruction; but my memory of him is vague. I recall him arrayed in a dark blue flannel suit, I can see his square shoulders, military walk, and lithe figure. Had I known then, as I passed him from time to time in company with professors who had been his fellow cadets, what I know now, I should certainly have gazed wonderingly into his spare, resolute, and rather pleading face,—looked as I did into the face of Abraham Lincoln when on his way to visit Hooker at Acquia Creek a few days after the disastrous defeat at Chancellorsville.

On that occasion some one told me that the President had just landed from the morning Washington boat, and was on the train made up entirely of freight-cars. Going out to where the train stood on the long wharf, I saw him sitting in an empty box-car, on a plank or board supported on what may have been cracker-boxes. Halleck, with his big pop eyes, was at his side in undress uniform; neither said a word. The President's habitually pensive eyes were off across the water to the Virginia shore. That was the only time I ever saw him.

There must have been a great personal charm in Jefferson Davis notwithstanding his rather austerely courtly address; and it has occurred to

me that in it, next to the almost irresistible influence of marriage ties, may be found the explanation that a number of Northern men, his personal friends, like Huse of Massachusetts, Cooper of New York, Ives of Connecticut, Gorgas and Collins of Pennsylvania, broke the natural bonds of home and blood and fought for the Confederacy; of these Collins only, the adjutant of the corps my first year, and the youngest of all, met death on the field. I always associate Mr. Davis with Hardee and Professor Bartlett; and in my mind's eye see them loitering in friendly intercourse under the elms at West Point. From what I learn, his personal charm lasted to the end. A Southern friend who visited him at Beauvoir a few years before he died referred to it, and went on to describe his home, shaded by pines and live-oaks with their drapery of swaying moss; its broad porch overlooking the still and peaceful waters of the Gulf of Mexico. I wonder if, as his eye rested on that stretch of sea, where now and then a solitary pelican winged heavily into view, he thought of his cadet days on the banks of the Hudson, and contrasted their peace with the dead hopes of his old age. He was a great man; and there is reason to believe that, had it not been for the financial blundering of his cabinet in the first year of the war, he might have won a place for his Con-

federacy in the family of nations. Its days, however, would have inevitably been few and full of trouble; and it would have fallen unmourned, the victim of its own arrogance.

Of the officers who were on duty at West Point, Huse, whom I have already mentioned, became the agent of the Confederacy for the purchase of arms in England and had perhaps the most varied and eventful career of any, — especially in view of the downfall of the South, and in the contrast which his old age offers to that of his classmate, Robert Williams of Virginia, Colonel of the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry. He and Williams were men of striking appearance. The former had a heavy windrow of united black eyebrows; the latter had steadfast, glinting, bluish-gray eyes, a long, bowing, tawny moustache, and an imperial. He was nearly six feet tall, had a striding walk, and spoke with measured deliberation. This Virginian was invested with the notoriety, unenviable and discordant since the days of Hamilton and Decatur, of having lately fought a duel. Such was the force of public opinion up to the war, that this barbarous custom drove officers onto the field even if it were repugnant to one or the other, possibly to both, of the parties involved. His antagonist, who challenged, put a bullet through Williams's hat; then Williams slowly lifted his pistol and

fired into the air; so at all events ran the gossip through the corps, and I never looked at his calm face without thinking of his chivalry. He remained loyal. I have always thought that the real heroes of the war were Southerners like Baylor and Williams, who, without a tie to bind them to the North, without a drop of Northern blood in their veins, yet remained faithful to the flag. The struggle they underwent before making their decision can hardly be realized. While at Meade's headquarters near Culpeper in September after Gettysburg, I saw a tall Virginian in citizen's clothes talking with General Meade, and on his departure I heard the General say to some one, "That is 'Bob' Williams's brother."

Twenty years after the war, while on the Board of Visitors, I saw Huse. His hair was very white and he was alone. Williams at that time was a brigadier-general, at the head of the adjutant-general's department of the army, and his name proudly borne on the army register. Huse was in narrow circumstances, at the head of a private school. Behind these classmates lay two roads: both starting at the same point, one led up to a crest, the other bore down and lost itself in a desert; yet I hope the good angel never abandoned the direly fated traveler who went on the latter way.

Among the Northerners I have mentioned in connection with the fascination of Jefferson Davis's personal charm, was Collins. It will be recalled that at an earlier period in this narrative I referred to him, foreshadowing what seemed to me his tragic death; and if I repeat that he was the adjutant of the corps my first year, every graduate will realize why the circumstances I am about to relate made a deep impression.

On the afternoon of the third day of the Wilderness, Grant ordered Warren, on whose staff I was then serving, to take his 5th Corps and, by moving behind Hancock, to gain Spottsylvania Court House between Lee and Richmond. The corps drew off the field just as the sun was sinking into the treetops; and as we ascended the hill from the Wilderness Run on the road towards Fredericksburg, the Confederates saw the column through the open woods of the Chewning farm, and began to cheer. The cheer was taken up all along their line. It attracted my attention, and I recollect that looking backward whence it came, I saw the sun going down like a great copper ball. Lee's army thought that Grant had had enough and was withdrawing to Fredericksburg. But they did not know Grant. The Army of the Potomac had crossed the Rapidan for the last time. We went on our way till we struck the Brock Road, and then headed

straight for Spottsylvania. Grant, in my judgment, was the only general we had who, after such an engagement as we had had for three days in the Wilderness, would have sent the army forward.

Night had fully set in by the time we reached the rear of Hancock's position. The fire that had raged through the woods, carrying death to many a poor wounded soldier of both armies, had climbed here and there to the tops of trees along the line, and flickered with wavering tongues of flame. All was still as death, save for the calls of numberless whip-poor-wills, and now and then the clank of a sabre scabbard. It was a long, dark, and gloomy ride; Grant and Meade with their staffs passed us. On our arrival at Todd's Tavern after midnight the 5th Corps halted, and I sought a place to lie down in the yard — the house and its porch being occupied by the general staff. In the darkness I trod on a figure lying just inside the gate and was accosted angrily,—

"Can't you see where you are going?"

It was Mackenzie of my class, and I replied, "Hello, is that you, Mack?"

He offered a place beside him on his blanket, and pretty soon he asked if I wanted to see Collins, who, as Colonel of the 15th Virginia Cavalry, had been killed late that afternoon. He told me that he was then lying dead in the garden.

Before he was buried, Lieutenant McConnell of Pittsburg and of the Regular Artillery, who knew him and his family well, removed a lock of his light hair for his mother. His grave was marked by his old West Point friends.

Collins had married into a distinguished Virginia family, and was on duty in Washington when the war broke out. He hesitated long, Love and Country tugging at the strings of his heart; and was not the good angel at West Point with anxious eyes and bated breath watching the contest? But at last Love won; he took the side of his Southern bride and met his fate on the edge of the Wilderness, just as the lilacs and the trilliums had begun to bloom, — flowers with which North and South have decorated so many graves. I never see the name of the old Tavern but I think of him and of the stars shining over us all. I see him as he was at West Point, invested with all the dignity of a First-Class man, and the chief officer of the battalion; and then I see him lying in the garden, and his friends bending over him as they lowered his poor clay. I sometimes think that he rose to the very height of nobility, in this: that he was ready to lay down his life for the young wife he loved.

One word now as to the ill-fated Warren. I knew him well; he had been my instructor at West Point and I belonged to the same mess

with him at Meade's headquarters after Gettysburg. His relief by Sheridan after the victory had been won at Five Forks is too well known to be repeated. Years passed, he dined with me at Rock Island Arsenal, looking like a ghost, and talking of nothing but the great wrong that Sheridan had done him. He had to carry his cross but a little while longer, for he found rest at last in the grave, begging, before death came, that he should not be buried in the uniform he had done so much to honor. It is a singular circumstance that the very day Sheridan died, a monument was rising on Round Top to Warren. I hope the generous Irish of Sheridan's impulsive nature prompted his spirit, as it floated heavenward, in the company of angels, to acknowledge openly that under the disturbing stress of battle he had done his fellow soldier a great and bitter wrong, and that he was sorry for it.

IX

CADETS AND PROFESSORS

WHILE the gallant records of the officers on duty at the Academy no doubt stimulated the ideals of the cadets as to conduct on the field, yet on account of the barriers of rank and custom hardened into rigid social restraints, their culture was without immediate influence in widening and enriching that of the cadets, or developing any ideals except that of bravery. The professors too, however rare and finely blended may have been their qualities and abilities, for a like reason of military isolation, had little or nothing to do with broadening and elevating the outlook of the corps. It is true, a few of the cadets, whose parents had been the early friends of the professors and the older officers, were now and then invited to dine with them. But rank in the army, as in the church, is generally accompanied by such pervasive self-consciousness that there was little or none of that free, exhilarating talk, so cheering and influential when age meets youth unconsciously, equal to equal.

Let me say in this connection that of all the officers of high rank whom I have ever met, only Grant and Sherman did not charge the atmosphere about them with military consequence. While at City Point I frequently joined

my friends of General Grant's staff, Porter, Babcock, "Billy" Dunn, and others, at his headquarters. The General, in undress uniform, always neat but not fastidious in appointments, would sit at the door of his tent, or sometimes on one of the long settees that faced each other under the tent-fly, smoke, listen, and sometimes talk; and not a soul of us, from the youngest to the oldest, ever had a thought of rank. Without lowering his manner to the level of familiarity, he put every one at his ease by his natural simplicity. He had none of the caprices of moods or vanity. Quiet in his presence and natural in his manner, gentle in voice, of absolute purity in speech, of unaffected, simple, dignity, Grant threw a charm around his camp-fire. West Point never graduated a man who added so little austerity or pretense to the peak of fame.

The only door that opened to me socially at West Point was that of Professor French, and I crossed its threshold but once. His family consisted of two or three most beautiful daughters; one of them was the wife of Lieutenant Greble, already mentioned, and the other became the wife of General Pennington, whose name is connected with so many fields. Years and years have rolled by since that dinner, and yet I remember two things about it: a Virginia ham, and a question the Professor asked me; and as

they come into my mind again I cannot keep back the smiles. I can see the dear old professor, with his very charming, soft manners, slicing a small hickory-chip and corn-cob smoked Virginia ham, saying that an old Virginia friend had just sent it to him. At that time our food and its service at the mess-hall was abominable and I can see yet the delicious, cherry-red slices falling from his knife, each with its little white border of fat, and I have no doubt that other mouths besides my own — for there were several other cadets guests that evening — watered well at the sight of the familiar home product.

The other incident, which is really the source of my smile, was this: After dinner was over — I cannot remember a single word or topic of the conversation while at the table — the old professor took a seat beside me and asked me if I had ever read any of Kotzebue's historical works; and if so, had I enjoyed them? Well, he might as well have asked me if I had ever been to the moon, and what I thought about it. And from that day to this my reason has been puzzling itself to account for his supposing for one moment that a boy from Kirkersville, Ohio, had ever heard of Kotzebue. As a matter of fact, I doubt if there were half a dozen boys in my whole State who had ever dreamed of the existence — let alone having any knowledge — of the great

German dramatist. I never see the name but the kindly face of the professor, the liquid, dark eyes of his daughters, and glimpses of a refined household break into view with the freshness of a row of blooming hollyhocks in a garden.

If I could see the old professor now I should like to talk with him; not about Kotzebue nor about the Bay of Biscay, — he had a sermon that he preached quite often that began, "It was a beautiful day in the Bay of Biscay," — but about Blair's "Rhetoric," with which he tried to open to our mathematically barricaded vision the principles and beauties of the fields of literature. I haven't seen the book for forty years, but remember some broad, intellectual landscapes in it about which it would be a pleasure to hear him talk; for he was a scholar and a sweet character.

Moreover, he might make plain the mysterious relations and affinities that a man's ideals have with his surroundings. What, for instance, have the scenery, the historic associations, the ceremonials at West Point to do, not with the mere matter of its concrete education, but with those high and abstract conceptions connected with it that we call honor and duty and truth? I do not know just how the old professor would reply; but I was detailed as his assistant in teaching the Fourth Class for a while in 1861, owing to the fact that the war required the services of

every officer who could possibly be spared for duty in the field, and I knew his methods well. He seemed to think that, in view of our perpetual use of mathematical symbols, the only way cadets could appreciate anything was by being shown that something was equal to something else. Therefore, in teaching practical ethics he would go to the blackboard and write,

Virtue = Morality,

etc. So I should expect that in elucidating my inquiry as to the nature and source of ideals, he would say in his thoroughly considerate way, —

"You have studied astronomy. Let us then look through the telescope that sweeps the sky of the mind. Those bodies you see floating there so radiantly in the light of the imagination are Honor and Truth; and that big martial planet with the ruddy glow is Duty. Now everything that elevates the feelings, as scenery or historic associations, brings all those ideals into clearer vision: and we have the equation

Surroundings = Inspiration;

Inspiration = Accelerating waves of Sentiment.

And in the latter member I find the explanation of what makes West Point what it is."

And I think the professor would be right. West Point is what it is by virtue of accelerated waves of sentiment.

The termination of my duties with him as his assistant is a matter of record in the archives of the Academy, a transcript of which is as follows:

"Jan. 6, 1862. Cadet Lieutenant Morris Schaff, for deliberately absenting himself from duty without permission from the proper authority, is hereby deprived of his appointment in the Battalion of Cadets, and will at the close of the examinations of his section in English studies be relieved from duty as an Assistant Professor and be returned to the ranks of his company. Cadet Clifton Comly appointed Lieutenant, *vice* Schaff reduced."

This was by order of the late Major-General C. C. Augur, who then was commandant. The circumstances of the formidable order are rather interesting, and, from one point of view at least, amusing, in that Comly, who succeeded me, and I were involved in the same offense, which was this:

We were walking round Flirtation Walk, a path so well known to every visitor at West Point. It was on a Sunday, and just before call to quarters. When opposite Constitution Island, and near the spot where the great chain was anchored that stretched across the river during the Revolution, to bar the passage of the British vessels, a turn in the walk brought us suddenly on two flashy — and I am afraid rather frail —

young women, both somewhat haggard, and obviously in dreadful distress of mind at what they took to be the prospect of immediate arrest.

They asked us in imploring tones the way to Cold Spring, which was screened from view by the cedar and timber of the island. Who they were or how they had reached the Point we did not know nor did we ask. On our telling them the way to go, they begged us to see them across the river, which, as it had frozen over, broken up, and re-frozen, was very humpy and rough. We told them it was off limits, that we could n't take the risk. Thereupon one of them burst into tears, and off we started with them. And I remember mighty well a thought that came into my mind as we made our way over the rough, frozen river, each with a girl clinging desperately to his arm: "Now, if this ice breaks and we go down and are drowned, what a subject for a Sunday-school book!"

After escorting them through the woods to a point from which they could see Cold Spring, we struck out as fast as we could go for West Point. As we reached the Plain near Kosciusko's monument, Bentz's bugle was blowing its first plaintive call for church, — how its mellow repeated chords still vibrate the strings of the graduate's memory! We set off on a dead run, and were completely fagged out on getting to the barracks.

Now, at that time, both as leader of the choir and as assistant professor, I did not have to march to church; and being very tired I foolishly decided to take my chance as to being reported absent, threw back my bed, and proceeded to take it easy. Well, my luxury was of short duration. I was reported absent, and immediately after dinner was over was put in arrest.

It seems that some one, looking thoughtlessly from an upper window of the hotel, had seen two cadets crossing the river; but the distance was too great to recognize us. This with some other information reached General Augur, and he, putting this and that together, concluded I must be one of the two offenders; but since he could not prove it, he did not prefer charges, and was limited in his wrath to the action stated above. He made up his mind, however, that the music would be fully as satisfactory to him and the congregation if my voice were not heard in the choir, and assigned me a seat close up to the chancel, thinking possibly that the nearer he could get me to that sacred place the better it might be for my moral and spiritual welfare. Of course, I could not make any explanation to him, or to the old professor, without involving Comly and raising a breeze generally; so there was nothing left for me to do but to grin and bear it.

It was round a table graced with veterans of

heroic records, at a dinner given to General Augur by Colonel Walter Cutting, of Berkshire, one of his staff, long after the war, that he was told the true history of that morning at West Point. (It is needless to say that the champagne had exerted its usual releasing and happy functions.) The General listened to my long story with the greatest interest, then appealed quizzically to the old veterans round the table whether he had not served me right. All assured him that he had done just right; in fact, was lenient; while one old veteran, who had a glass eye in the place of one that he had lost in the Wilderness, declared, "It would have been a blessing if the ice had broken and drowned him."

Later, I was the guest of the General at his home in Georgetown, D. C. He was a fine example of the old army type, and very attractive in his home, where the fire on his hearth blazed and murmured softly night after night, as we sat before it, and he talked of other days.

It so happened that Comly roomed just above me. His promotion, and my reduction to the ranks — though to advanced position in the church — made no difference in our way of life. As neither of us was striving for class standing, despite the fact that both of us reached a staff corps, he would come down into my room or I would go up into his, and there night after night

we would ramble from topic to topic as two little idle, barefoot boys might ramble along an old dusty road toward a schoolhouse among the fields.

After a life full of usefulness he lies out in the beautiful West Point Cemetery, among whose grassy mounds and brooding monuments we wandered and loitered more than once, little dreaming of our experiences in the life before us, or that it would be his resting-place. He was the most beloved man in my class, and one who had the rare good fortune, granted to so few in this world, of realizing while living the esteem which usually is withheld till the grave closes over. The glee that was so natural with him came with such suddenness into his rather frowning face that it was irresistible, and his spirit of comradeship — he was never ready to go to bed — was so open and sympathetic that his cheerfulness was always contagious. Many and many a time we talked over our little trip across the Hudson — now with the Army of the Potomac camped around us, its fires glimmering here and there over the bare, war-devastated fields of Stafford (he was the adjutant of the 1st Dragoons then), — now at Rock Island, — and now at West Point again, when he was instructor of ordnance; and hours never bore away from two old friends on happier wings. And to-day, seen

through the veil of the past, there is a wistful sense of the distance between me and him and other friends of my youth.

By following a road overshadowed by chestnut-trees, one soon reaches the cemetery where he and many officers of distinction are buried. The surroundings, the river so peacefully flowing on below you, Crow Nest rising so near and so loftily above you, the deep contemplation of over-bending trees, the hills and distant fleckered landscapes, all bring pictures of beauty and a sense of great peace. It has none of that loneliness, so sincerely solemn, of the out-of-the-way country graveyards; and certainly none of the city cemetery's hollow mockery of death by flowers and walks and evergreens. And yet, there is sweet, holy pensiveness about it which, like plaintive music, has mellowed the heart of many a cadet. And if, while wandering here and there in it, the bugle's notes came faintly to him, war and its glories faded away; and the butterfly wavering over the graves, now lifting up and around and over the monuments of the great, and living but for a day, seemed a fitting emblem of the vanity of all ambition.

X

CEREMONIALS

The subtly inspiring and enduring part that ceremonials, as well as scenery and historic associations, play at West Point, has been mooted.

The first ceremonial I saw there was held in the chapel, — the celebration of the Fourth of July, 1858. General Scott reviewed the battalion as it marched in, and Madame Patterson Bonaparte was present. The chancel was draped with the colors, and before it was a raised platform for the reader of the Declaration and the orator. As the notes broke from the band in the choir, and reverberated along the arched ceiling, to be wafted back, as it were, from the sky of the grand painting over the chancel, every patriotic string of the heart was set a-vibrating. I listened to the cadet orator. What a gifted and enviable child of fortune he seemed to me! And, behold, at that very hour three years afterwards I stood in his place!

I must make a place here for a very funny incident connected with the delivery of my own address. It was called an oration; but how I should hang my head if any one were to repeat some of it to me now! To be sure, the war had just begun, and I suppose there was the usual amount of sanguinary froth in it. But however

that may be, I committed it to memory, and never feeling very sure of myself, concluded to put the manuscript, a roll of little note paper, in the breast of my coat so that, if worse came to worst, I could pull it out and read it.

Burroughs was reading the Declaration, and reading it well; I tried to think how my speech began, and to save my soul could not recall three sentences. As he drew to the end, my perplexity deepened. He closed; the band played a patriotic air; the orator was introduced, and the fellows applauded as he arose in dazed confusion. There was a great crowd present, filling the aisles. It seems a little dog had followed his people up into the choir, and just as I was about to carry my hand to my breast to extract my speech — for my mind was perfectly blank — some one stepped on the little creature's tail, and out came a couple of sharp yelps. Whereupon the whole corps broke into a good laugh, — I can see Comly and three or four of them laughing now. Well, it brought me to my wits and off went the oration with a bang.

On the walls of the chapel are black marble shields bearing the names inscribed in gold of the Revolutionary generals; and there was a reference in that address to Benedict Arnold and his shield. — The tablet has on it only the words "Major General, Born 1740." — For some years

I could ring out the sentence, but now it has vanished like the cry of seabirds along a beach.

I have no doubt the "oration" was dripping with metaphors and similes, for when my little intellectual lamp is lit, they come flying in like moths at night. And, by the way, there is nothing that the Academic Board and instructors in my day, save dear old Professor French, despised so much as figurative language. The sudden pallor, curling lip, and "oh, spare us" look of disgust that attended their woe, were so obvious, however, that a cadet rarely made use of a metaphor a second time. Well, while I was delivering the address, my eye fell on the face of Church, the professor of mathematics. He was scanning me with that cold and intrenched expression worn by some one in almost every audience. Were I to have given it translation, it would have been in these terms, —

"From all oratory, and above all from *Kirksville* oratory, good *Lord*, deliver us!"

But not so the dear fellows in cadet gray: they applauded the orator long and loud as he sat down. God bless them all!

The next year Michie of Ohio, the late professor of philosophy, and for many years dean of the faculty, delivered the address, which in its preparation he submitted to me; and I thought it was a great deal better than mine. *There* was

a youth whom Nature, having in mind the prolongation of ideals, fashioned lovingly. In her bounty she did not mould Michie, either in figure or bearing, of the distinctly soldierly type; but in his personality she put an immediate and permanent charm. His laugh she made so natural and infectious that the day he arrived, Custer gathered a crowd of us around him by exclaiming, "Fellows, come here and hear my fellow Buckeye laugh." This anecdote will recall to many men and women the naturally agreeable and sunny-hearted Michie, for his acquaintance was wide. His laugh, I am sure, will be heard again, and recollection will bring back hours which he imbued with the charm of his candor, his scholarship, his boyishness, and an indefinable something which diffused sunlight over all the world.

While a professor, by bringing the Military Academy into cordial relations with men of influence and station, with the business, educational, and social world, he rendered the institution a great service and threw a lustre both over West Point and over the career of the army officer. In another direction, not only at West Point but elsewhere, he rendered a like, if not a greater service to the country and also to his generation: namely, by checking that pride and tendency to militarism which naturally followed the victory

of the North over the South. During the war he was brevetted repeatedly for daring conduct and most creditable services and was a brigadier-general within a year after graduating; but the war had barely ended before he began his sweet mission by holding out the hand of charity and friendship and hearty good will to all Southern graduates who had joined the Confederacy. No one in the army deserves more credit than he for healing the wounds and knitting once more the old sweet ties. First, Grant at Appomattox, then Bartlett at Lexington, then Michie at West Point, — statues of these three should stand at the head of the "winding stairs of light" should Peace ever build her tower to the memory of the dead. In the fresh atmosphere of his intellectual height and natural fascinating simplicity, in his courage, purity, and honor, he came near being the incarnation of the Academy's ideals. And now, in the joyful expectancy of that other world, whose reality he never doubted and of whose glories he loved to talk, he lies out in the beautiful West Point Cemetery, and I cannot but think that the Spirit of West Point watches over his clay.

In the autumn of 1859, the remains of Taylor and Gaston, graduates, the latter a North Carolinian, who had been killed in a battle with the Indians, were brought back to the Academy

and buried with military honors. This ceremonial, the first of its kind ever seen by the writer, made a deep impression. I can see the caisson with the coffins, the stars in the flag lying on them, and, immediately behind them, led by a soldier, the horse in full equipment, a trooper's boots in the stirrups pointing to the rear. Whoever first thought of reversing the boots must have been a poet and a great one; for in that one change of direction he visualized into perfect expression all that poetry can see or can say of the end of life. I remember the drapery of the muffled drums of the band, and hear its wailing music, as slowly, with reversed arms, we marched in column of platoons to the cemetery. The leaves of the chestnut-trees were falling, the haze of October was full on the hills, and there was serious, great pomp in Nature as well as in the ceremonial.

When the commands, "Ready! Aim!" were given preparatory to firing the customary three rounds over the graves, humor, as usual, was not far away from grief. "A plebe" anticipated the command "Fire!" and off went his piece, followed by a general ragged discharge, officers and file-closers yelling, "Steady! steady, there!" at the tops of their voices.

Before the smoke cleared away, "Report that man in B Company for gross carelessness!"

shouted Hardee, thoroughly disgusted, and with vengeance in his tones. Of course it was very important to Taylor and Gaston that our guns should all go off together; and the next two rounds were all that could be desired. Crow Nest echoed the volley. The smoke billowed over, and up, and disappeared; and back we marched with quick step to cheering music.

The reception of the colors was another ceremonial which never lost its sentiment by repetition, and which I saw for the first time that autumn. On this occasion they had been deposited in the hall of Colonel Hardee's quarters, — and I wonder whether those quarters with all their memories, that hall and the colors with all their associations, ever came into his mind as he sat alone before his camp-fire during the waning hours of the Confederacy. After the corps was brought into line for the ceremony, the color guard fell out and proceeded to the Colonel's quarters under the elms, where his small, deep-chestnut sorrel stood saddled and bridled before the door. The colors appeared, the guard saluted, and in the hands of the color sergeant, W. G. Jones, of Cincinnati, they were borne to the front of the battalion, which was brought to present arms. It was a beautiful sight; and again I see the flag with its long, golden tassels swaying gracefully downward as the salute

was acknowledged, the color guard, and the drooping elms that line the green.

Jones was a handsome cadet with softly red hair. Before I came to know him I thought he was the coldest and most arrogant man I had ever seen; and when he was put into the same ward with me at the hospital some time in the winter of '58 or '59, I felt, to use exaggeration, like yielding up the ghost on the spot. But soon we were the only occupants, and before we returned to duty I was as much an admirer as I had been a silent critic. He was simply delightful, and ever afterward, when we met, his smile carried a charm; and when the news reached me that he had fallen at Chickamauga, a mist clouded my eyes. "One of the finest and bravest men who ever graduated at the Academy," says his classmate, General Harry Wilson.

The corporals composing his color guard were Babbitt, Farquhar, Buell, Audenried, and "Dick" Hill. Audenried, whose eyes were very black, his cheeks a mingled white and red, and who was himself the personification of fastidiousness and neatness, became Sherman's aide, and his monument is now one of the most conspicuous in the cemetery at West Point. Hill — Richard Mason Hill of the Hill and Mason families of Maryland and Virginia — graduated in the Ordnance, and we served together at

COLOR GUARD

(Taken by Professor C. W. Larnell, 1899)

Fort Monroe. He became one of my closest friends. But his days at the end were so sad, that death was a relief as he sighed them away. He sent for me a few weeks before he died, at Springfield Armory, — he asked to have his sword buried with him.

In my day the graduating exercises were held in the chapel, accompanied as now by a short address from a member of the Board of Visitors. They were very simple, yet the consecration of the place invested them with the impressive and inspiring elevation of a ceremony. The first class that I saw receive its diplomas was that of 1859. With band at the head of the column, the battalion marched in side arms to the chapel, escorting the graduating class, the companies taking their customary seats as at church service. Major Delafield, in full uniform, with heavy bullioned epaulettes, his Roman nose spanned with glasses that gave him the look of an old eagle, stood on one side of the chancel, the adjutant on the other. Between them was a drum with one of the heads removed, holding the diplomas. Each cadet was called in the order of his standing, when Delafield, the diploma having been handed him by the adjutant, would open it and read with deep tones, "You are recommended for the Engineers," or the Topographical Engineers, the Ordnance, Artillery, Infantry,

Dragoons, Cavalry, or Mounted Rifles, as the case might be, according to the class rank. The cadet, on receiving the diploma, would bow and march back to his seat amid the applause of the battalion; and if he were an especially popular man, as Hardin, Reese, and Lockett, for instance, it was plainly manifested.

The late General Joseph Wheeler graduated fourth from the foot, and had the corps been called upon to predict who of the class would probably be the last to emerge from obscurity, the chances are that the choice would have fallen upon Wheeler; and yet to-day his fame throws a shadow far beyond that of any one of his class.

In 1860 was graduated the best loved class in the corps, that to which Wilson, Porter, Jones, and Bowen belonged, and we applauded them well. The man who graduated at the foot of the class, who had been six years at the Point and had just squeezed through at last, was Harold Borland, commonly known as "Ginger," on account of his hair being the exact color of ground ginger. Borland had distinguished himself while reciting to Captain Benton in Ordnance by a remarkable answer to the question, "Mr. Borland, how many pieces will a 12-pound shell burst into?" — the average number having been determined well by experiment. "Ginger" threw his eyes, unexpressive but very blue, on

the floor, and deliberated a while; then slowly lifted them to a point near the ceiling over Captain Benton's head, still deeply reflecting; and finally responded, "Not less than two."

When his name was called, he marched up and stood before Delafield, who surveyed him coldly for a moment, then read in his deepest chest tones, "Harold Borland of Arkansas, you are recommended" (a slight pause) "for the Mounted Rifles," — the only thing under the heavens for which he could be recommended. The old eagle gave him a beaky look, and then handed him the diploma, whereupon "Ginger" bowed nearly to the floor, came down the nave with an inane smile, and was greeted with the heartiest applause. As a Confederate major he was exchanged for the late Major William H. Forbes of Boston.

XI

THE OLD CHAPEL

Not long ago, at a smoke-talk at the University Club in Boston, I listened to the architect whose stately plans for the reconstruction and enlargement of the buildings at West Point have been accepted. There were a number of graduates present, and, when called upon for comment, the only building of which they spoke as having any sentiment for them was the chapel. All the others might go, the barracks, the adjutant's office, and the academic buildings, but when the architect laid his hand on the chapel, there was feeling at once.

It would seem that this is the only building of them all that has made an appeal. Has this appeal, so declarative of the simple and abiding elements of our natures, and, moreover, so fundamentally spiritual in its relation to the real as well as to the ideal West Point training, been given due weight in the determination of the new location? Have the exalting, refining, and glorifying influences which stream from Nature and mankind's spiritual being been overlooked in the reconstruction of West Point, to satisfy the craving of artistic ambition and at the same time to pander to the vanities of the pomp of war?

CADET CHAPEL, 1860

If I be rightly informed, not only the chapel, but the very scenery itself has been subordinated to a strictly military conception of the Academy. In harmony with this mediocre conception, for it is far below the level of what I believe the mission of the Military Academy to be, the superintendent's office and residence are to take the present site of the hotel, thrusting themselves with all their commonplace associations into the very heart of West Point's scenery, in which there is something almost divine. Instead of the Hudson, the mountains, the distant leaning landscapes, the dragging mists, the sun-bathed fields, all appealing with immediate address to the heart of every cadet, he is to see a building devoted to not a single mental elevation, and associated with possibly a severe military slaughterhouse glare and a feverish vanity. What freedom will he have when the superintendent's residence and the adjutant's office are on the present site of the hotel? At every step, from the time he leaves barracks, he will be under the snooping eye of somebody in official life, keeping alive a restless self-consciousness. If the little chapel is to be moved, and the hotel is to be relegated into the line of officers' quarters, — which I think the public has a right to say "no" to, — where, in the æsthetic sense, should the chapel go? In view of first impressions, should

it not go where West Point's scenery culminates? and that point I think is universally conceded to be somewhere near the present site of the hotel. There, close to the daily life of the cadet, with Nature as its auxiliary chancel, it would go on in sweet harmony with the scenery so imbued with celestial peace, appealing to his heart, ever nourishing his ideals, and elevating his courage, more and more, to the high level of scholarship and righteousness. In thus selecting its choicest site at its national school of war for the chapel the country would express its recognition of the preëminent element of our spiritual nature, of God, of art, and of that ideal world whence come our conceptions of truth, duty, and magnanimity. West Point should stand for more than a routine military post. The loftiness of the appeal of Nature about it calls for more than that.

"The admirers of Inigo Jones have always maintained," says Macaulay, "that his works are inferior to those of Sir Christopher Wren, only because the great fire of London gave Wren such a field for the display of his powers as no architect in the history of the world ever possessed." So it may be claimed that the reconstruction of West Point offered to the architects and determining council of the plans a field for the recognition of the supremacy of art, religion,

and scholarship which has never been offered before.

The secret of the precedence of the old chapel over the other buildings in the affections of the cadets does not seem mysterious to me. Two coexistent and intercommunicate realities—imagination and the sense of freedom—supply the explanation. The latter the cadet gains as he enters the door; for there he passes beyond the restraints of rank, age, ancestry, and scholarship. There for one hour he is free from all earthly distinction; and a seriously uplifting feeling comes over him that it makes no difference in his case whether he stands at the head or the foot of the class, — a private in the ranks, or a professor on the Board, a cadet corporal, or a lieutenant-general. Nowhere else at the Academy does he rise to this freedom, and once attaining it, his imagination becomes operative with marvelous directness through the objects before him: the shields, the captured colors with their heroic memories, and, above all, Weir's great suggestive painting, Peace and War, its sky mounting with a sense of infinite space over the chancel, and bearing this solemn admonition from Proverbs on a tablet between the figures, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." Thus, led on by the association of ideas, mental images rise that transport him far beyond the do-

main of drums, and there is established between him and the chapel a companionship that lasts.

The choir and organ-loft is over the door; besides the broad aisle there are two side aisles; the latter with their pews are reserved for the professors and officers. The cadets occupy the main body of the church, their gray and white uniforms giving a fine mass of color.

As I have indicated, the painting on which the eye sooner or later rests is over the chancel. At one end of a tablet, Peace, draped in creamy, flowing white, with very dark hair across her temples, stands with uplifted, pleading eyes, holding out an olive branch. At the other, and partly resting against the tablet, is War, represented by a Roman soldier, bared, powerful in figure, and of stern countenance. His look is downward and deeply reflective, and with one hand he grasps firmly the fasces of imperial authority. Near where the arch of the ceiling springs, on one side is a vase with a bit of color, balanced on the other by a reclining flag loosely gathered on a staff, its colors mingling deeply. On a level with the figures and surmounting a globe rising behind the tablet, is a bald eagle with partially outstretched wings; the steely white of his head and neck contrasting with the browns of the tablet and the soldier's garb. The upper background is faint, distant, and sprinkled with stars.

INTERIOR OF CADET CHAPEL, 1860

In my day there were no studied or superficial decorations; everything was freely harmonious, — guns, shields, colors, and painting all tending to elevate the mind and to carry it up to the level of the mood of Peace and of the seriousness reflected in the face of War. It was easy to hear the acclamation of all ages greeting Peace; it was easy to imagine voices breaking from a dome higher than that studded with stars over the Roman soldier. "Blessed are the Peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

When compared with its successor rising with towers and battlements in stately loneliness, and at the very front of conscious achievement in architecture, the present chapel is not an imposing building, — far from it. It is small, modest, and low. Four massive wooden columns, with broad steps leading up to the door between them, sustaining a pediment of substantial presence, are its only dignity. But in its secular relations it is fortunate in its company. It has the Library on one side and the Academic Building on the other, and in such close fellowship that it can hear the rain pattering on their roofs and all those varied sounds that mark the life of mortals, — footfalls, voices, and the daily murmur of coming and going. In its present location, too, it hears the laugh of the young fellows who in the bloom of life pour through its door

on Sunday; it follows them at drill; pauses reflectively with them while they parade at sunset; and with tenderness, if the impersonation be allowed, she hears their voices mellowed by distance as they sing in the twilight of summer nights; and we have no doubt that, as one after another of her boys fell at Antietam and Gettysburg, Cold Harbor and Chickamauga, the stars at midnight surprised her more than once trying to hide her tears.

NORTHEAST ANGLE OF ACADEMIC BUILDING, 1906

XII

THE BACKGROUND OF WAR

WHENEVER I review my cadet life, my fellow cadets, West Point, its buildings, its surroundings, and its ceremonies all seem to be in the sweet distance and clothed in the delicacy of dreams, — as gravely beautiful and far away as the shadows of the trees and slowly drifting clouds I used to look at as a boy in a quiet spot where a brook (we called them "runs" in the West) halted and brimmed near some old beech trees on its glistening course through the sheep pasture. And yet, when the battlefields of the war come back into view,—and nearly every one is stained by the blood of a friend,— with the quickness of a dream the battalion becomes distinct and real. The other day I saw the name of Pelham; and at once West Point flashed upon my sight, and I saw him as if he were alive, walking across the "area"; and then I saw myself riding across the field near Brandy Station, where he was mortally wounded on March 17, 1863.

Of all the men at West Point in my day, either as cadets or as officers, his name will possibly outlast all save Cushing's; and I have sometimes thought that at the last the dew will sparkle brighter on Pelham's memory. And that for two reasons: First, he was closely associated with

Lee, whose towering fame, like a softly burning torch, will light the face of the Confederacy down the murky galleries of time, wooing atonement for the South at every step. And, second, poetry and sentiment, under some mysterious affiliation or charm, seem loath to turn away from great displays of courage and sacrifice of life for a principle; most lovingly of all they cherish the ashes of brilliant youth associated with failure. The romance of defeat has more vitality, I think, than the romance of victory,—like the morning-glory, it blooms freshest over ruins.

But however this may be, his name, the "gallant Pelham," is now almost a household word throughout the South. He went directly from West Point into the Confederate Army, and soon was serving with Jeb Stuart. By his courage, Stuart's artillery checked our attacking column at Fredericksburg under the very eye of Lee, who, it is said, exclaimed, "Is it not glorious to see such courage in one so young!"

Later, in his general orders recording the defeat of our army, John Pelham's was the only name below that of a major-general mentioned by Lee. He spoke of him as "the gallant Pelham"; "and *that* from Lee," says one of his distinguished Southern friends, "was worth more than any rank in any army, more valuable than any title of nobility or badge of any order." He

OLD ACADEMIC BUILDING, LOOKING WEST, 1860

was known henceforward as "the gallant Pelham."

There was something about him that gave to Lee's extolling epithet that immediate response of aptness such as we feel when in poetry or elevated prose a word or phrase strikes the eye and ear as the complete expression. It was felt in our lines; for one of his West Point acquaintances, — I think it was Custer, — taking advantage of a flag of truce shortly after the battle, sent this message to Pelham: "I rejoice, dear Pelham, in your success."

He was gracefully tall, fair, and a beautiful dancer, and it may well be asserted that Nature was in a fine mood when she moulded his clay. Her final touch was to give him a pronounced cowlick on his forehead, which added a mounting swirl to his blond hair. His eyes generally were cast thoughtfully downward, and a little wrinkle on his brow gave just the faintest suggestion of a frown on his otherwise unclouded face.

In the winter of 1863–64, while with the Army of the Potomac, more than once I traveled the road to Kelly's Ford, where he was killed, little dreaming of the height of his present fame. I have always thought of the circumstances connected with the coming home of his body to his widowed mother in Alabama, as uniting all the beauty and mystery of night. The moon was full;

and her still light lay white upon the way by the cotton-fields he knew so well, and white on the roof and in the dooryard of his home. His mother, now lying beside him in the little village graveyard at Jacksonville, Alabama, stood waiting for him on the doorstep, and, as they bore him up to her, she whispered through falling tears, "Washed in the blood of the Lamb that was slain." He was only twenty-five years old.

And while I have been writing about Pelham and the battle of Fredericksburg another face has come into my mind, the face of one of Pelham's classmates, whose fate contrasted sadly with that of his valiant comrade. His case in brief was this: His first action was with the Regulars in one of the battles before Richmond in 1862, and, to the absolute surprise of all who knew him, he disappeared with the first volley. Had one passed down the battalion searching for the bravest cadet in it, his square, bulldog jaws and resolute face would have certainly caught the eye for the honor. After the engagement, he reappeared and acknowledged his failure to do his duty, alleging in explanation the low state of his system. But at the next fight off he went; and then his commanding officers had a private interview with him, telling him that such conduct could not be overlooked, that he must remember he was a graduate and a Regular. The poor fel-

low cried, and begged for just one more chance to redeem himself. The chance was given, and it occurred at Fredericksburg.

Forward moved the Regulars. The fire swept them; still they went on; but not ——. White as the moonlight that fell on Pelham's dooryard, he broke to the rear, and was dropped from the army. And I have never had anything but pity for him; for I am as well satisfied that fear is often congenital as I am that there is courage in the world. He should not be blamed. What must have been his feelings as he struggled with himself before the command moved forward! The details of his conduct were given to me by a fellow officer who was present on both occasions; and no doubt there are grizzled old Regulars living who with charity remember the "Leftenant."

Had the corps been called upon in my day to name its best type of soldier and gentleman, the one who by manners, bearing, and dignity wielded unconsciously the widest and most elevating influence, it would have been Kingsbury of Pelham's class. He was from New York, stood near the head of his class, was high-bred and distinguished in appearance, and had that composed voice, natural dignity, and air of command, which cannot be mistaken. There was nothing studied and nothing artificial about him, none of those strides, attitudes, and fierce glances which

are often the amusing concomitant of what is termed "military." He had the double good fortune of birth and inherited wealth, both of which were reflected in his ease, address, and cultivation. He remained loyal, distinguished himself early as a battery commander, and was mortally wounded, a colonel of volunteers, at Antietam, at the early age of twenty-six. His name, like those of so many that fell, and are long since forgotten, will be strange to the reader; but if the Spirit of West Point could show the roll of her ideal soldiers, I believe his name would stand among the very first.

His father was a graduate; his brother-in-law, also a graduate, was the Confederate General Buckner of Kentucky, who surrendered Fort Donelson to General Grant in 1862. Buckner, a stocky, broad-chested, and ruddy-faced man, I saw at West Point twenty years after Donelson; his hair was then snowy white. In the suit of a Kentucky planter he sat alone on one of the benches under the elms near the superintendent's quarters, taking a puff from time to time from a long, white-stemmed pipe. Was he living the days of his youth over again, and looking wistfully backward upon them as the cadets passed and repassed him?

In the battalion with me, there were many more than those I have mentioned, whose records

and fate it would give me a sweet pleasure (though sometimes sadly tinged) to record. Ames, who stormed and carried Fort Fisher; Babcock of Grant's staff, one of the best friends I ever had; Beebe of my class, who won a medal of honor; Mordecai, who, although Southern in all his family connections, remained loyal, and with Michie was brevetted for conspicuous daring while carrying on the siege of Fort Wagner; the handsome Guenther, whose battery will be remembered by hundreds of veterans of Sherman's army; and Blount, Willett, Faison, Ball, Dearing, and many more who went South; but I cannot do more than I have done. The dear fellows do not need my pen; history, it is true, is silent; but as long as West Point lives they will live with it; and when her guardian spirit and the spirit of our country — and may I add that of the dead Confederacy — meet on nights to come, and talk over those days of trial, when eras closed, and history was made, then all of them will be mentioned.

While in 1858 and 1859 the heart of the country was stirring to its depths under the impulse of the inevitable conflict, at West Point there was absolute calm and peace. It is barely possible that the dire tragedy of the future may have been revealed to some one of the officers or professors as "things which must shortly come to pass,"

after the manner of those revealed by the angel to St. John on the Isle of Patmos. But the chances are that no such revelation was ever made, at least to any one in uniform. For the military spirit in its mediæval habit of thought and aristocratic isolation, rarely has felt those deep movements which, in the hearts of the people, have preceded great events and kindled the imagination. And, howsoever overcast the future may have been elsewhere, at West Point it lay glowing to us all. Not a word was said about politics; days came and went; the river flowed on, and the flag we now call "Old Glory," and which was so soon to feel the hot breath of civil war, with a spirit light as our own, rippled out its gleaming colors to every passing breeze.

To leave this as the final image of West Point would be misleading. Far beneath this political calm lay awake those unappeasable antagonisms which sooner or later always develop when members of a state make concessions of any kind to the social and political prestige of other members. Haughty disdain on the one hand, crouching hate on the other, invariably breed under such conditions.

There is evidence that the attitude of the New England colonies at the outset of their political intercourse with those of the South was one of

standing aside, with bowed head, and hat in hand; while the patriot planters, with dignified manners, acknowledged the honor as a matter of course. The descendants of those planters carried into the life at West Point their fathers' notions of precedence, and, to its honor and glory, their fathers' tone of the soldier and the gentleman. But unfortunately, yet very naturally, —for once we grasp a sceptre we are apt to flourish it, — vanity asserting precedence now and then marked the conduct of some of them. After slavery had become a national issue, they did not hesitate, when angered, to show their inherited contempt for the North; and I am glad to say that the cadets from the North, and especially those from the West, would not and did not stand it. This spirit lay at the bottom, when Jesup of Maryland attacked Paine of Massachusetts with his sword; when Strong of Massachusetts was forced into a bitter fight, — the same Strong who fell so gallantly with Shaw at Fort Wagner; and later, when "Rip" McCreery pitched upon Harry Wilson, the famous cavalry leader, the captor of Jefferson Davis, more because he was a Northerner than from the nature of any affront received.

But while these instances illustrate elementary differences between sections, yet for the honor of the men themselves, and above all, for the wel-

fare of the country, — for West Point friendships did more at the close of the war than any other agency to heal the scars, — the State from which a man came, the political views he may or may not have held, or the name he bore, had little or nothing to do with determining his roommates, and the growth of the warm ties of friendship which blessed our youth.

When politics was broached to me for the first time — and I may say it was the only time — it gave me quite a complete surprise. I was passing through the Sally Port just after our first encampment in 1858, and, falling in with Willis of Georgia, I was accosted with the question, "What State are you from, Mr. Schaff?"

I answered, "Ohio."

"What are you, a Democrat or a Republican?"

"A Democrat," I replied.

Then, with the cordial, fascinating Southern manner, he observed, "You are all right," and passed on.

It made an impression, for up to that time the question where a man came from, or what his politics were, had had no importance whatever with me.

"Ned" Willis was small, lithe, and noticeably voluble; he had yellowish hair, and a voice which, when raised, screamed like that of a

SEACOAST BATTERY

Rodman Guns

(As armed after Civil War)

hawk. The night when the late General Upton of New York and the late Major Wade Hampton Gibbes of South Carolina had their great political battle, I heard him scream well. In many ways he was the incarnation of the fierce, wild, and delirious spirit which possessed the South at the outbreak of the war. In many ways also he resembled his classmate, Cushing, especially in the color of his hair, the high, quick tones of his voice, and his wide-open, laughing mouth. In due time the Upton and Gibbes fight will be described; but now I would rather think of Willis in the light of the letters he wrote to his mother from the field. Some of them appear in the "Southern Historical Papers," and are very sweet and lovely. He was colonel of the Twelfth Georgia, and was killed near Bethesda Church the 31st of May, while on our campaign from the Rapidan in 1864. His ashes are not resting in Georgia among her Confederate dead of whom she is so justly proud. No, in Hollywood, on the bank of the James, and within a sparrow's voice of his great chieftain, Mr. Davis, the gallant-hearted boy lies, and on the marble of his tombstone is carved "There shall be no night there."

XIII

"JOHN BROWN'S BODY"

When the news of the John Brown raid reached West Point, and it was learned that the father of one of the cadets, James Barroll Washington, the great-grandson of the brother of Washington, was a prisoner in the fanatic's hands, the feeling was very great. The release of Colonel Washington, the trial and the execution of Brown, with its upheaving effect on the country, followed rapidly; and in each scene of the tragedy West Point was deeply engrossed.

How little we cadets at West Point foresaw what the death of that tall, gaunt, gray-bearded and coldly gray-eyed man meant! that the trap of the gallows creaking beneath him was the first dying wail of an age; that civilization was facing about; and that the creative spirit had her brush in her hand once more, and was outlining a new field for the imagination, one darkly and mysteriously suggestive, as are all the works of God in the affairs of men.

I have called John Brown a fanatic. If we view him in the light of a slave auction where father and mother and children are all under the hammer, their pleading eyes on a brutalized audience, he appears with the halo of a martyr; if we estimate him by the feasibleness of the means he

employed to carry out his scheme, he appears an unmitigated crank; if we dismiss both reason and sentiment and direct our view across the plain of history, he rises into the blazing company of those who have marked the epochs of the world.

But let this be as it may, I hear voices floating, as it were, down a valley of the past! Have they ascended to some open crest? Surely their notes are growing clearer. Sing on! I know you well, for I have heard you more than once. It is the old Army of the Potomac singing that deep refrain as we marched under moonlight and starlight along the roads of Virginia.

When the full purpose of Brown's devilish plot was divulged, involving as it did on final analysis a general massacre, if need be, for its complete fulfillment, many of the Southern cadets broke out into natural and violent passion, denouncing in unmeasured terms the Abolitionists, and every one in the North who shared their antipathy to slavery.

And now, indirectly as an outcome of the John Brown raid, the first collision at West Point of an unmistakably political nature took place between Northern and Southern cadets. It is true there had been instances where combats had been more or less tinged by sectional feeling, — to which reference has already been made, — but

this one, between Wade Hampton Gibbes of South Carolina and Emery Upton of New York, was distinctly political in every feature. It was the most thrilling event in my life as a cadet; and, in my judgment, it was the most significant in that of West Point itself. For it was really national and prophetic, in this respect, that this battle between two of her spirited cadets, one from the South, the other from the North, duly represented the issue between the States, and duly the courage and bitterness with which it was fought out to the end.

I have been urged by one whose friendship I cherish, whose blood is all Southern, and whose record of loyalty and courage during the war has added lustre to his name, to pass this battle over lightly. But it foreshadowed too much; leave it out of West Point history, and one of her most presageful pages is gone. No, it threw into our life visions too ominous and foretelling to be suppressed; it was the first determined stand by any Northerner against the long, aggressive, and unchallenged dictatorship of the South. I had no bias through acquaintance, friendship, or sympathy with either of the contestants. Upton I came to know well while serving with the Army of the Potomac, and loved him. With Gibbes, four years my senior as a cadet, I never exchanged a word socially; but he was a gentleman through

and through, and worthy of his historic name and State. I am told that, after his gallant services to the Confederacy, he manfully endured the never fully-appreciated disappointment of defeat, passing into an old age of engaging sweetness.

Now Upton, before coming to West Point, had been a student at Oberlin, an institution hated and despised by the South for its pronounced attitude on slavery, and more than all for admitting negroes as students. When he was being quizzed on his arrival as a new cadet, as to what he had studied, and where he had been to school, he openly and frankly declared that he had been at Oberlin and was an Abolitionist, the first and, I believe, the only cadet who ever had the temerity to plant himself squarely in the ranks of that unpopular band of liberty-loving dreamers, who, bigoted as all reformers are in their views, were impatiently unwilling to listen for a moment to any further compromise with slavery. Upton's sincere declaration of his position — obnoxious in the last degree to the South — at once made him a marked man.

Under the natural exasperation over the Brown raid, men from the South, as already intimated, gave vent to their feelings; and, in the course of some talk with his fellows, Gibbes, in referring to Upton in connection with his student life at Oberlin, made remarks on his intimate

association with negroes, of a character keenly offensive, and such as no self-respecting cadet could stand for a moment. There has never been a suspicion in my mind that the South Carolinian expected these unpremeditated remarks ever to be repeated; but they were, and Upton promptly called for an explanation. It was just after the battalion had broken ranks from the march from supper; and soon the word was passed through our companies beyond the Sally Port that Gibbes and Upton were to fight in a room on the first floor of the First Division.

The national significance of the affair was interpreted at once; there were more than personal matters involved; and a crowd soon gathered on the pavement, on the stoop, and packed into the hall. I made my way into the First Division, with Willis, "Comanche" Robertson, and others from beyond the Sally Port, and with them gained a place on the stairway. The sentinel, an inexperienced "yearling," brushed aside and unheeded, was calling loudly for the corporal of the guard. But no one cared for him or his corporal of the guard, or any authority vested in them or in anybody else: the excitement was too great, as from time to time during the progress of the battle we could hear angry voices, the scuffling of feet, and those other dull sounds which fall so heavily on the ear and mean so much.

Personally I do not know what took place in that room; but there are those living who do, and who, wisely enough, perhaps, are unwilling to disclose what they saw and what they heard. I do know, however, what was going on in the hall and on the stairway.

I have heretofore told how Willis and Robertson were screaming, and I remember distinctly the face of the latter as he howled about the use of bayonets; but how or when he was to use that savage implement I have no remembrance. I do remember this, however, that when the fight was over, I saw Upton's resolute face bleeding.

And now came an incident that burned its way into my memory. John Rodgers, Upton's roommate and second, overheard, amid the mighty turmoil after the fight was over, some of my immediate friends shrieking their maledictions. He came to the head of the stairs, and, with eyes that no man ever looked into and discovered fear, called out, "If there are any more of you down there who want anything, come right up." His eyes were glaring like a panther's.

It is needless to say that nobody wanted to face that man. I am satisfied that the South then and there beheld what iron and steel there was in the Northern blood when once it was up. I was born and bred in a family some of whose ties were Southern and all of whose political views

were sympathetic; but I felt proud of Rodgers as he stood on the stairs defying that mob — for it was nothing less than a mob. When it was over, we all went back to our rooms, little dreaming that this was but the prelude of that mightier collision between the States. It is fortunate that we cannot penetrate the future, for then there would be no past, that vast ocean whose long, silent beach is the playground of Imagination.

Almost fifty years have passed since that December night. Gibbes and Upton are in their graves; — the south wind breathes softly over Auburn, where Upton's ashes lie; — the dawn breaks, the twilight comes softly on, the stars appear, and lo! the mocking-bird is still singing among the hollies that redden above Gibbes's grave. Not in anger, not in malice, and not with indifference to the feelings of the living, have I referred to this episode in the lives of these men, both so brave, both so high-minded, both sure to be honored and mentioned with affection, as I believe, when the guardian angels of West Point meet in her upper sky, and talk over the battalions of '58 and '59.

Another incident connected with the John Brown raid, besides being characteristic, has a bordering of humor. The late Major-General

Pierce M. B. Young of Georgia, a conspicuous cavalry leader, a member of Congress after the war, and Minister to Guatemala and Consul-General at St. Petersburg under Cleveland, observed one day during Brown's trial, in the hearing of a Massachusetts man, as they were marching off guard, "By God, I wish I had a sword as long as from here to Newburgh, and the Yankees were all in a row. I'd like to cut off the head of every damned one of them."

Newburgh, faintly visible up the river, lies about eleven miles from West Point, or something over fifty-eight thousand feet. If we allow two heads to the foot, Pierce would have beheaded over a hundred thousand Yankees at a slash, which might have made a material difference in New England's ability to fill her quota two years later. I am afraid, however, that, if Young had had his gory West-Point-and-Newburgh blade, it would have been bothersome sometimes. It was too long; he never could have got away as he did when Custer and Merritt and Wilson were after him on several occasions. But he was a very good fighter and a very good-hearted fellow, and, as a member of Congress, never failed cheerfully to do all in his power for his old West Point friends.

The Massachusetts man, who was my first roommate, and for whose ears Young's extra-

vagant wish was intended, preserved in 1859 that discreet silence which was characteristic of his Puritan blood. At Gettysburg, however, in 1862, he spoke. The position his guns occupied is still pointed out to the visitor of that field, and when the official guide reaches it he says, "Here are Calef's guns; they opened the battle."

There was another occasion that autumn when the smothering feelings of the Southerners broke into a little flame which, for the time being, was very amusing. It was at a meeting of the Dialectic Society. I wonder if that celebrated society is still in existence. It held but two meetings while I was a cadet, and yet when I graduated it gave me a dignified and almost stately diploma, adorned with a copper-plate engraving, and a broad red ribbon bearing a large seal. I never see it that it does not evoke a smile. Well, on the programme was a play (I think it was "Bob Acres") given wholly by cadet talent. The narrow, bare, cold, and high-ceiled hall over the Sally Port was crowded; and during one of the scenes there was a fierce stage combat with swords between Kilpatrick of New Jersey, the great cavalry leader, and the handsome and popular "Jack" Garnett of Virginia. It was reported that the former during his furlough had made a Republican speech, and well he might, for he was a most blatant and interminable talker. Both

were good swordsmen, and they clashed and lunged at each other in great style.

As the battle progressed, the excitement grew, till Ned Willis and "Comanche" Robertson of Texas concluded it was the South against the North, and yelled from the pit, "Kill him, Jack, kill him!"

Counter voices screamed, "Go it, Kil!"

It was the funniest performance, I think, I ever witnessed. All four of these cadets were cast for parts in a greater play: Kilpatrick, well known as a brave and reckless fighter, became a major-general of cavalry; Willis has been mentioned; "Comanche" Robertson, so named for his resemblance to an Indian in more ways than one, attained rank in the Confederacy; and "Jack" Garnett commanded Garnett's Battalion of Confederate artillery at Gettysburg. I met him after the war. He was still the same handsome and popular Virginian; but life for him was clouded, and in a few years he died.

The mention of Garnett recalls the one other meeting of that wonderful Dialectic Society. It was held in the library, the only time while I was there that the old authors on the shelves had a chance to hear the voices of youth. On this occasion Garnett read Horace Porter's famous lines on "Life at West Point." We thought it a mighty good production then, and as I read

it over lately, it still sparkled. The other night, while the Loyal Legion was banqueting at Delmonico's, and Porter was delivering a memorial on Schofield, he referred to our cadet days, and to officers on duty at the time. As I listened to him the years fell away from him; I saw him again as cadet adjutant, and heard once more the thundering applause with which we welcomed his rhyming effort.

XIV

FURLOUGH IN 1860

In June, 1860, our class went on its furlough, which, by way of explanation, is a leave of absence during the encampment, granted to each class at the close of its second academic year. It is a great event in a cadet's life, for it is the only time he can leave West Point during the four years' course, and he looks forward to it with longing. The thought of it steals in upon him as he rambles alone; it is floating in his mind as he goes to sleep; and I am acquainted with one, at least, who never failed to think of it in church. And how could he help it, with his forehead cushioned in gloves and handkerchief on the pew rail, and the clergyman solemnly droning the stately Litany, lulling the very air of the chapel into slumber?

And, by the way, Robert E. Lee, Jr., in his delightful recollections of his father, says, referring to their life at West Point while General Lee was superintendent of the Academy, "I never knew him late for Sunday service at the Post Chapel . . . and I remember he got always very drowsy during the sermon, and sometimes caught a little nap." However many little naps the Confederate chieftain (and for one I am willing to vote him the leading gentleman of his time) may

have caught in that dear little chapel, there were some of them still left haunting the choir-loft in my day.

After the "Te Deum," the curtains were slyly drawn, and I saw more than one of my fellow choristers take advantage of the opportunity: Wesley Merritt, the cavalry leader, "Jack" Garnett, Harris, "Lengthy" Smith, and fiery red-haired Randol, whose clear soprano voice led us all. It was his battery at Frazier's Farm, on McClellan's retreat to the James, which fought the enemy at their very muzzles, stirring the blood of friend and foe to admiration. How firmly then his tenor voice must have rung out to his cannoneers, — with another tone than when he sang the "Venite," and with another vibration than when I heard it singing, "When shall we meet again, meet ne'er to sever," on the last Sunday before graduation. On that occasion there was deep feeling and sweet pathos in his voice, and in every other voice, too; and well it might have been, for down below us in the body of the church were a good many splendid-hearted cadets who in a few years were killed.

But it is while the cadet is performing sentinel's duty in the dead hours of the night, while there is around him the mystery of darkness, that he dwells on his coming furlough most fondly. He clothes every hour of it with the light

and beauty of dreams. In his fancy he hears the timber and the fields welcoming him home again; he feels the paws of the old dog he hunted with as he leaps up on his breast to kiss him; he sees the plain, country church spire reverently pointing starward; and soon, in his uniform, he is walking up its aisle, and his mother is at his side. Yes, yes, furlough days! you are lifting again through the mists, and with all the freshness and spicy odor of blooming sweetbriers. And yet no old graduate ever looks back to them that a smile does not gather. And why? Oh, because he sees not the visions of his boyhood's fancy, but a youth gloriously unconscious of his rank callowness.

On reaching home we found the political campaign of 1860, probably the most exciting and certainly the most fateful which our country has gone through, in full swing. The very air was charged. Lincoln had been nominated by the Republicans; Breckinridge by the Southern extremists. The Democratic party of the North had rallied behind Douglas, the Unionists of the South had put forward Bell of Tennessee. I was too young and altogether too immature to realize the situation; but it was easy to see that the haughtiness and disdain of the South had at last challenged the manhood of the West; and that the followers of Lincoln were ready to face the

issue for good and all, and, if need be, to fight it out to the bitter end.

The following incident illustrates fairly well, I think, the depth to which the feelings of the North were moved. I was visiting an uncle, born and bred in Rockingham, Virginia, a giant in stature, but mild in disposition, of upright walk, and blessed with a child's faith in his Bible and religion. In his dignified manner and old Virginian respectfulness of tone he turned to me just before the dinner was served, and asked, "Morris, what does the South say about this presidential election?"

I had started to tell him what I thought they felt were their rights under the Constitution as to slavery, — and I believed then and I believe now they were right, — when my Uncle Sam interrupted, exclaiming, "Morris, I tell you slavery has no rights either before God or man; it is a curse and a disgrace to this land, and the South shall not bully us under the threat of disunion into its defense any longer!" and he brought down his big hand firmly on the table where lay the old Bible which he read every morning and every night before kneeling in prayer.

I looked at him with amazement. His face was illuminated, and in the light of the fires of his conviction I got my first clear view of the

shadow of war; and I had nothing further to say. Could we have laid our ears to the lids of the old Bible, which must have felt the jar of his hand, I am inclined to believe that we should have heard the voice of Joel rising far above those of Miriam and David, saying, —

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains. . . . Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

It is true there were hundreds, yes, thousands, South and North, who were ready to make a compromise; who had no bitterness in their hearts; who loved the Union and could not bear to think of civil war. But the day for compromises had gone by. The crusade of the Abolitionists on the one hand, and the vanity, haughtiness, and disdain of South Carolina on the other, had done their fatal work, driving both sections into positions from which neither prayer nor appeal could extricate either one of them. How haughtiness and disdain have characterized the bearing of the rich and powerful just before every great revolution! I fear they will characterize those to come. And the pity of it all is that so

much blood will flow, so many young fellows, who bear no ill will and are innocent of a base ambition, will be called on to lay down their lives for the wrongs of others, to be the food of wars which should and might be avoided by a little forbearance of one toward another, by invoking the spirit of Christianity, and by a steady display of the qualities of the real gentleman.

We returned from our furlough on the 28th of August, 1860. In the next six months Lincoln was elected, the South seceded, and the war between the States began. These events are the broad foreground of a great picture, and one in which is reflected much of West Point's life. The longer we gaze at it the more we see in it, and the more conscious we become, I think, of a mysterious historic effulgence. Does our imagination spiritualize the events, and make us see Fate forcing her way as she leads the country to its destiny; is it Slavery dragging herself death-stricken at last out of the world; is it the glow from faces of high-minded youths in gray and blue; or is the radiance in the face of Peace? My heart beats before it.

There is a strange fascination to me in the memory of my life at West Point during those fateful six months.

I have referred to the circumstance by which,

through the suggestion of my Southern roommate, I had been assigned to D Company. It was the distinctively Southern company; in fact, over half, perhaps two thirds, of its members were from the South. In it at that time were Rosser, Young, Dearing, Pelham, Patterson, Willett, Watts, Faison, John Lane, and "Jim" Parker, all of whom reached high rank in the Confederacy. From the North were Babbitt, Dimick, of Dimick's Battery, pure-hearted Sanderson, "Deacon" Elbert, and Custer. The latter, with Jim Parker, lived in a room diagonally below me; and with that well-mated pair I fooled away many an hour that should have been devoted to study.

West and myself occupied a room on the third floor of the 7th Division. It looked out on the gardens attached to the quarters of Professor Kendrick, and of Lieutenant Douglass, a smallish man with a voluminous red beard, who was an instructor of drawing, and who, besides an artistic sense, had a greater propensity for chewing tobacco (fine-cut) than any one I ever saw. Behind the garden rose the hills, streaked with ribs of gray rocks, clothed with tapering cedars and struggling trees, from whence, as spring drew along, came many a richly warbled note.

Of course, between me and my roommate there was no concealment. We talked over the

state of the country and everything else, as boys and loving friends might. He told me about his home, the slaves, and the plantation; and I got an impression — and I believe it was a true one — that theirs was a humane, just, and happy family.

The North has never fully understood the Southerner's character, — I mean, his reluctance to differ from his fellow Southerners on any public question, his natural hesitation to lay his heart bare to any one, and above all to a Northerner. His traits are the result of several forces, — provincial isolation, long submission to a dominating public opinion, and the reserve of an inherited dignity. There is nothing he hates like smooth cunning. If you want to be sure of his inward convictions, he must be sure of your sincerity; you must know him well, and you must see him alone.

We had barely settled down to our work again before the smothered excitement, that had lain smoking ominously, blazed up all over the country, like fires in a clearing. What had happened to the patient and stolid North, that night after night the streets of her cities and towns should flicker with the torches of marching processions? There they go, marching up Broadway by historic and stately Trinity, thousands of them, and the sidewalks lined four or five deep. Along the grassy streets of little country villages here they

come, under overbending elms; and now, in far-away Iowa, their torches flare between fields of ripening corn. How significant that here and there are old, white-haired men in the procession! Has some martial spirit beaten the long roll? Or, what seems to me more probable, has not a spirit of deeper thought and closer ties with the heart talked low and confidentially to the bells in the steeples? For the moral sense of the North is certainly aroused! Look where you may, the hearts of the people are stirring.

This exhibition by the passive North, marching four abreast with flaming torches, now and then bursting into a deep, hoarse cheer for Lincoln, was hailed with sardonic delight by the original secessionists. It gave them the one chance they wanted, namely, to appeal to the sensitive pride of their naturally conservative yet impulsive people. They at once translated it into the terms of a challenge, something that no Southerner could overlook. The danger of over-sensitiveness as to personal courage! what calamities it has wrought for nations, — and what saddened hours for individuals! The papers and the political orators took it up, and, before the conservative spirit could get into action, a fierce desire to engage in war with the North had bedded itself permanently in the hot blood of the Southern youth. Oh, gallant men who fell in Virginia, I

have often thought that if your fathers could have met the North as equals, and, uninflamed by oratory, talked the question over calmly and without arrogance, the extreme secessionists never could have swung your Southland into desolation.

It may sound strange to civilians, and especially to students of the history of that period, to be told that national affairs even at that time were not discussed at West Point. The discussion, by officers or cadets, of the politics dividing the nation into parties would have struck the average man as crude, and totally unbecoming young men or old men whose lives were consecrated to the service of the country, regardless of which party might be in control. Moreover, the tension was too great, and inasmuch as we professed to be gentlemen, we naturally refrained from touching on disagreeable subjects. Representing, however, as we did, every Congressional district, we were in miniature the country itself. The letters and local papers from home kept us acquainted with the state of public feeling, and, since the consciousness of a national crisis is always contagious, it was not long before it was felt at West Point.

As a result, a state of recklessness as to discipline, and a new indifference to class standing, were more or less noticeable in the conduct of the

entire corps, save among that laudable few who worked day and night to get into the engineers. The effect on the conduct and temper of some of the Southern cadets was marked by increasingly provoking arrogance; and strangely enough, savage encounters took place between Southerners themselves. For instance, one in which my roommate engaged with a fellow Southerner was, I believe, wholly due to the prevailing impatience and irritability aroused by the political situation. I have no idea what it was about, or who was to blame; but I do know that I urged West to settle it. His Southern blood was up, however, and seeing that I could do nothing to stop it, I asked him to get somebody else to go with him, for I could not bear to see those two friends in a fight. With a heavy heart I stayed alone in our room; and when he came back, terribly punished, I went with the impulsive, warm-hearted fellow to the hospital. The day came when he and his antagonist were the best of friends, and fellow officers of the same Confederate battery.

XV

THE STRAW BALLOT

In October, 1860, some evil spirit stole his way into West Point and thence into the room of a couple of the bitterly partisan Southerners in my division. The next day — as a result of his visit — a box was set up at a suitable place, with a request that cadets should deposit therein their preferences for President of the United States.

Now, the father of big, swarthy John Lane, a member of my company and one who subsequently joined the South, was running for Vice-President on the ticket with Breckinridge. Although John was very far from being a leader intellectually, nevertheless he was a well-meaning, whole-souled, and generally popular man. Whether his popularity had anything to do with the result of the balloting, I do not know, — the fact of his father's candidacy is mentioned only to throw a sidelight on the situation.

A better scheme than this straw ballot to embroil the corps, and to precipitate the hostilities between individuals which soon involved the States, could not have been devised. When I went to deposit my ballot I met Frank Hamilton, of my class, who had just voted. "How have you voted, Frank?" I asked good-naturedly.

"Oh, for Honest Old Abe," he answered with

his peculiar bubbling chuckle. "I suppose you are for Douglas?"

"Yes, for the 'Little Giant,' Frank."

Now Hamilton was from the Western Reserve of my State and a Republican, and I should have been surprised had he not voted in harmony with his courage and convictions. My roommate voted for Bell.

When the ballots were counted (I cannot recall the exact number of votes for each candidate) the South with surprise and indignation found that there were sixty-four votes for Lincoln. It was always a peculiarity, almost childlike in simplicity, for the old South, to take it for granted that every one was going its way; it never understood the silence of the Puritan. At once, with almost astounding effrontery, the self-constituted supervisors of the election appointed tellers for each division to smoke out those whom some of them saw fit to designate luridly as "the Black Republican Abolitionists in the Corps."

And now was exhibited the most equivocal if not pusillanimous conduct that I ever saw at West Point. When the tally was over, only about thirty could be found who had voted for Lincoln, and, according to the tellers, every one of these was from west of the Hudson River, the bulk of them from north of the Ohio; while it was notorious that every member of Congress east of the

Hudson, save, possibly, Arnold of Connecticut, was a Republican! What had become of Lincoln's backers from east of the Hudson? Well, well! I suppose the everlasting din the South raised over their voting for Lincoln was so disquieting to the intellectual repose of our New England friends that all took to reading Emerson — Emerson on "Idealism," wherein he says, "The least change in our point of view gives the whole world a pictorial air." So, when the dreaded tallymen came round, with their proverbial shrewdness they decided that they would give the world — at least a part of it — a "pictorial air" by changing their point of view from Lincoln and Hamlin to Bell and Everett. Or had those descendants of the heroic Puritans who, unshaken, faced the question of the execution of a king, answered the tallymen with stern and resolute countenance, "What business is it of yours how I voted? You get out of this!" Whatever may have happened, according to the tellers there was not a single recorded vote from New England for Lincoln.

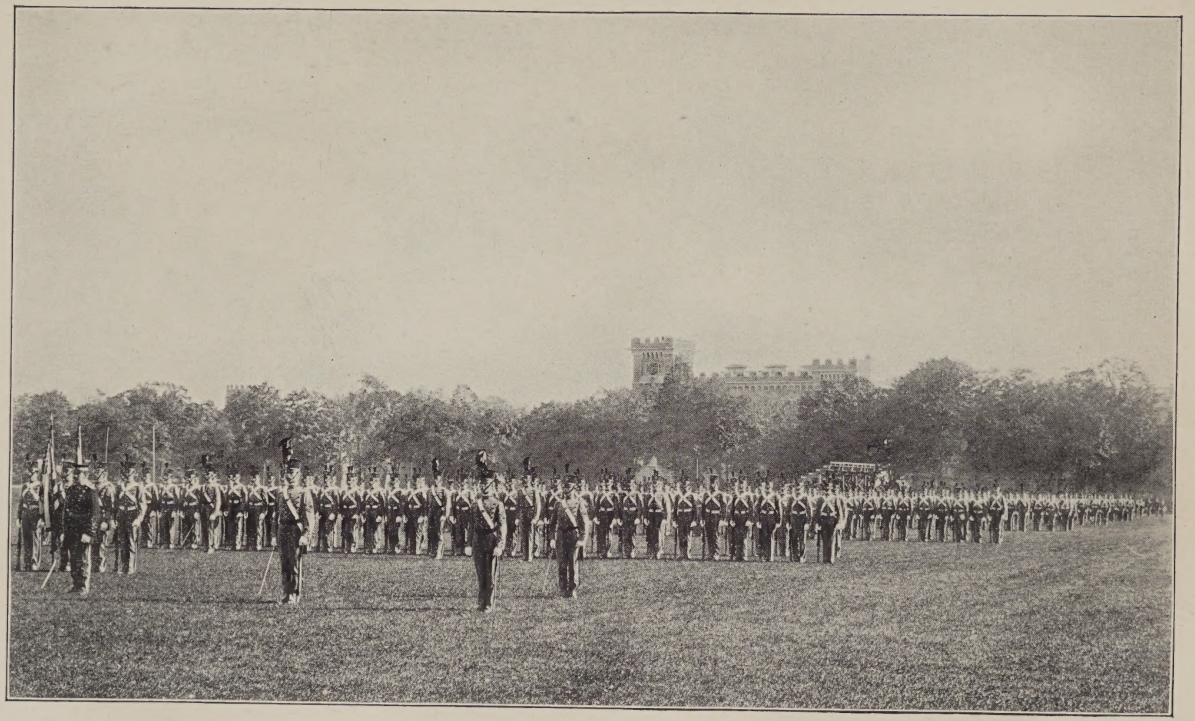
One of the tallymen was from Vermont, a Yankee of Yankees, who, with humiliating subserviency, as it seems to me, accepted complacently the duty of unmasking his fellow Northerners for the scorn of certain partisan Southerners. While performing his despicable mission (that

term sounds harsh, but nothing softer describes the service), he came to the room occupied by Tully McCrea of Ohio and G. L. Gillespie of Tennessee. With a loud and impertinent voice he wanted to know how they had voted. When McCrea announced his vote for Lincoln, the tallyman made a disparaging remark,whereupon McCrea told him in significant tones to get out of the room, and after one glance from Tully's chestnut eyes he promptly complied. How often I have seen those same warm chestnut eyes swimming as they responded to the tender and high emotions of his heart!

On account of his political views, a big Kentuckian, who fell at Chickamauga fighting for the South, picked a quarrel with McCrea and assailed him violently. Two or three years later, McCrea was called on once more to show his courage. It was the afternoon of Pickett's charge, and all through those terrible hours he stood with his battery on the ridge at Gettysburg; over him were the scattering oaks of Ziegler's grove; and with his commanding officer, Little Dad Woodruff, who there met his death, he faced the awful music. In one way I really think it took more courage to vote for Lincoln than to face Pickett; but however that may be, he met both ordeals well. At the battle of Olustee, Florida, he was shot through both legs. He

is now retired, a brigadier-general, and when I last heard of him, he was living at Atlantic City. I imagine him watching the long waves endlessly breaking on the beach; and I hope that as again and again they swish up toward him and sadly lull away, nothing but pleasant memories come back of our boyhood days.

I do not wish to encumber, mar, or lower this narrative with combats between boys; but there is one I never look at as the past files by without real amusement. This lively encounter took place between Dunlap of Kentucky and Kilpatrick, in the hall of the 6th Division, just after undress parade on the stoop, and while the companies were forming to march to supper. Hearing the row, I joined the crowd and soon was upon the stairs. A very fair view of what was going on in the hall below me now presented itself; and whatever may be the speed of the thoroughbreds of Kentucky, New Jersey certainly had the pole and, at the finish, the race that night. A funnier row I never saw in my life. No sooner was it over than those of us who had remained to see it through discovered that we were hungry; but meanwhile the battalion had marched to supper, and the regulations provided that any one entering the mess-hall after the doors were closed should be reported. We gathered in front of the door and decided to go



INSPECTION, ON PARADE

in together, each one flattering himself that he might be the lucky one to escape the eye of the First Captain, now the widely and favorably known General James M. Wilson of Washington. I took my position immediately behind the tallest man in the corps, red-headed Cowan of North Carolina, thinking thereby to be hidden, at least at the outset of the movement.

The door was opened suddenly. We started with a rush; but unfortunately for me, Cowan stumbled at the threshold and nearly fell headlong on the floor, leaving me in full view.

The next night at parade, when the adjutant read the reports for delinquencies, my name was duly mentioned. I think Wilson spotted every one of us. I had a good many reports, far too many to be consistent with the exercise of common sense, but this one I have never regretted; for a little spring of humor has always bubbled from it.

After Lee's last attempt to break through the Army of the Potomac at Appomattox had failed, it will be remembered that he asked to meet Grant to arrange for the surrender of his army. The following from a letter of my friend, General Pennington, will not only be interesting, but has historic value: "At the surrender, when the armies were lying quiescent, separated only by a long ditch or stream, Custer said to me: 'Let's

go and see if we can find Cowan.' So we rode down to the edge of the brook or ditch, and seeing an officer on the other side, wearing one of our dark blue capes, we called to him and said we would like to see Colonel Cowan of a North Carolina regiment. He said he would send for him. We waited and shortly Cowan, mounted, came and jumped his horse across the ditch. He was at once hailed by Custer, 'Hello, you damned red-headed rebel,' and we all burst into laughter. We were enjoying our chat when we noticed a commotion in the Confederate camp. It turned out that General Lee, accompanied by Babcock, was coming on his way to meet Grant. They were proceeding on a road to our left as we faced the Confederate camp and had just crossed a bridge spanning the ditch about one hundred and fifty yards from us, when General Lee spied us and sent Babcock over to say that he did not wish any communication between the officers or men of the two armies until after he had seen General Grant. We separated at once, having agreed to reconvene as soon as General Lee was out of sight. As soon as they turned a corner of the road, we reassembled and were still chatting when General Lee returned. He had seen Grant. As he proceeded into his lines there was a grand rush toward him of his men and officers, cheering, I suppose, to give

him heart, for he seemed very much depressed as he rode by us."

On the 6th of November, 1860, the people reversed our little boyish ballot, solemnly, and overwhelmingly; but the undreamed-of fiat had gone forth. With the election of Lincoln the doors of the new era, which in the fullness of time the Ruler of the World had ordered, began slowly and inexorably to swing open. There is always an idea of morning about the coming on of a new era; but to those who are near the opening doors, "the wings of the morning" (which I have always thought to be the most beautiful piece of imagery in the world) are not visible. And for very good reasons: for have they ever yet opened but that the dreadly-bosomed clouds of war were moving fast, and the sky growing fearfully black?

No, to the living there is nothing of the morning when the doors of a new era begin to open, creaking wailingly the mortal agony of ill-featured wrongs as they turn on their old and sin-incrusted hinges. The mornings of new eras have dawned only on the eyes of prophets and martyrs, whose foretelling lips and far-seeing eyes are generally dust long before what they have said, and what they have seen, have become accomplished facts. But the interesting thing about it all is this, that as soon as the mask is lifted from any great historical event, its resur-

rection begins, clothing itself in symbols, and appealing to the imagination for utterance. And the character of our speech is directly related to our understanding of the spiritual significance of the event itself.

So it will be with the history of our great Civil War; and so it will be with the West Point of my day. We were at the birth of the era, and the sky was black enough; but the history of those days, and above all of West Point itself, will have its resurrection morning. For nature makes provision that at last every event which marks the upward progress of the world shall bloom in the heaven-dyed language of the poet.

XVI

THE BEGINNINGS OF STRIFE

First of the Southern States to take a step down the stairway of their tragic fate was South Carolina; and she took it with such promptness that it gave the appearance of having been premeditated, and the opportunity welcomed. The ballots of the North were barely counted before she proceeded speedily to carry out the threats which she had repeatedly made for over thirty years. With what looks now like the veriest delirium, she vauntingly withdrew from the Union; and then, as if the smell of blood were already in her nostrils, she began frenziedly to organize military forces. It need not be said that each mad step she took was noted by the country with almost bated breath, but at no other place, save Annapolis, was her course followed with more absorbing and painful interest than at West Point; and especially by the cadets from the South. Her tempestuous movements were full of forebodings to them; this I know, for my Georgia roommate could think or talk of but little else.

Discussion over the issues of the past now died down, nor was there any further question of the responsibility for the peril to which the country was drifting. The shrill clangor of South

Carolina had hushed those questions for us all. But for my roommate and his fellow Southerners it had raised another, — one much more serious for him and for them. It meant at last a dismal alternative — either to stand by the Government, or to obey the commands of States in revolution. Should they yield to the natural pleas of home and blood, or should they meet the eye of that thoughtful face called duty?

I cannot think of those days or of my friends of the South, haunted as they were by a spectre which no casuistry could bar out, most of them later to climb the hill of old age and poverty with the past lying below them in the shadow of defeat, — I cannot think of all that without seeing West Point suddenly take on the mysterious background and fated silence of the scenes of the Greek tragedies. But thank God! over the voices of the furies I hear Athene pleading for Orestes.

And now, through the creative atmosphere of the analogy, the upper, over-arching West Point breaks more visibly; and I behold, as it were, its fountain of truth, its hearth of courage, its altar of duty, and its temple of honor, and those spiritual messengers that evermore try to lead every cadet in the way of the service of man and of the state.

South Carolina did not secede formally till

the 20th of December, 1860; but on the 19th of November, owing doubtless to information from home, one of her sons, Henry S. Farley, of my class, handed in his resignation. He was the first member of the corps to withdraw. He had very red hair, never forgot that he was a South Carolinian, and in his first encampment with us had beguiled its misery by reading Plutarch's "Lives." Four days after his departure, James Hamilton of his State resigned — we always called him "Little Jim" in contradistinction to Frank Hamilton of Ohio of our class. He was small, had open blue eyes, very black hair, and was liked by every one. A rather interesting incident was connected with a call I made on his wife in Culpeper, Virginia, during the war. In the fall after Gettysburg, while the Confederate army was lying between the Rappahannock and the Rapidan, Meade suddenly put the Army of the Potomac in motion and crossed the Rappahannock; whereupon Lee hurriedly withdrew behind the Rapidan, but the advance of our cavalry was so prompt that Mrs. Farley and the wives of several Southern officers were unable to get away with their army. A few days after our arrival in Culpeper, Frank Hamilton rode over to my quarters, and in the course of his visit told me that Mrs. Farley was in town, and proposed that we should call on her.

She was staying at the house of one of the leading citizens, and our approach up the walk I think must have been noted, for the manner of the colored servant who answered our knock indicated that he had been directed sourly to "go and see what those two young Yankees want." We told him we understood that Mrs. Henry S. Farley was staying there, that we were her husband's West Point classmates, and should like to pay our respects to her. With some natural embarrassment for us all, Mrs. Farley entered the room; but she was young and we were young, and the natural feelings of youth soon overcame all embarrassment on her part or on ours.

In the course of the call, without any ulterior thought, one of us asked where and with whom Jim Hamilton was serving. In reply she said inadvertently that he had gone off with Longstreet, and then, with a flush, added, "Oh, I don't know where he is now." The interesting fact of all this is that she had unwittingly disclosed what up to that time was wholly unknown to us, that Longstreet's corps had gone to help Bragg at Chickamauga, — a movement of mighty significance in its results, and one which, had it been resorted to oftener, might have made a difference in the fortunes of the Confederacy.

When I got back to Meade's headquarters

I told the provost marshal-general, General Sharpe, what I had heard. He listened with the greatest interest and said, "Well, that confirms it then," referring to a report that had reached him through the secret service.

I have often wondered, as memory has recalled this incident, and her young, sweet, smiling face has come into view again, where the channel of life ran for her and her husband; I hope there was many a band of sunshine across it; above all as it wound through the cypresses of their dearly loved and ill-starred Confederacy.

Before the end of the year all but one Wofford of the cadets from South Carolina, three from Mississippi, and two from Alabama had resigned; although Mississippi and Alabama did not secede until early in January of 1861. Among the three from Mississippi was Joseph Koger Dixon of my class (the *o* in his name he pronounced as in "over"). In one of the incidents connected with his resignation I have always seen a little trickle of humor as well as a real bit of history.

To appreciate the former it will be necessary to imagine — but kindly I hope — a youth with stubbly light hair and high cheek-bones, and without an affectation in the world. Such was Joseph Koger Dixon, who rarely turned from the blackboard to recite without having in the mean time unconsciously but thoroughly

chalked his naturally serious face. And now, with only kindly feeling and respect for his memory, I must confess that his wrinkled brow, Mississippi pronunciation, habitual troubles with mathematics, chalk illumination, and chiseling look at the instructor when hopelessly mixed in a demonstration, always amused me. It is for the same reason, I suppose, that one boy has never yet seen another break through the ice, stumble headlong over a stick, or say, "yes, ma'am" to his male teacher, without grinning and oftentimes howling with delight. However all that may be, there was a broad smile on the face of every one of us when, on his return from the telegraph-office, Christmas Eve, Koger announced to us with his habitual seriousness that he had sent in his resignation in the following terms:—

"West Point, New York, December 24, 1860. To the Governor of Mississippi: The war is begun. I leave to-morrow. Joseph Koger Dixon."

As a matter of fact, as we all know, the war did not begin till the following April; but in Joseph Koger's mind, apparently it was under way that Christmas Eve of 1860, — under way while "halls were dressed in holly green," bells in steeples were ringing, and fires on hearths were blazing over the birth of the Prince of

Peace — "And they shall call his name Emmanuel."

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

As I recall the wan faces I saw in many a field hospital, the lone chimneys, and Virginia homes burning, the awful, heart-sinking spectacle of our prisoners as they landed from Belle Isle and Andersonville, the packed Confederate graveyard at Rock Island, over whose lonely, billowy mounds my eye traveled pensively more than once; when I recall the savage butcheries of the war — what a contrast they make with the Christmas Eve of 1860, the last time for four years when the song of peace on earth and good will towards men was sung by the whole country in accord.

I cannot but think that through the yearning mysterious power of old-time and long-time affection, the tones of the Old North bell in Boston, of Trinity of New York, of St. Michael's of Charleston, of St. James of Richmond, were carried southward and northward, meeting over Mount Vernon that Christmas night, and that tears were in them as they blended and died away over the fields of Virginia.

Besides Dixon, John W. Lea of Mississippi

resigned on December 11. He belonged to Custer's and Mordecai's and Farley's class, the one just ahead of our own, and was known throughout the corps as "Gimlet" Lea. At the battle of Williamsburgh in May, 1862, he was severely wounded and was taken prisoner. "I was passing through a barn after the battle," says General Pennington in a letter to me, "when I heard some one say 'Hello, is that you Pennington?' It was Gimlet; he was lying in a stall wounded in the leg. I asked if I could do anything for him. He said no, that a Mrs. Durfee in the town had offered to take care of him, and he was to be taken to her house that afternoon. When he recovered he married Mrs. Durfee's daughter." Custer, who had distinguished himself in the same engagement, did all he could for his unfortunate classmate before he moved on with the army. When McClellan was withdrawing three months later from the Peninsula, after his disastrous campaign, Custer, who was then on his staff, asked permission to go and see his old West Point friend. He found Lea at the house of his fiancée, who had met her future husband for the first time as he lay in the hospital. Now their wedding was set to take place the coming week, but Lea was so anxious that Custer should be present and be his best man that it was decided to have the wedding the fol-

lowing evening. This was such an interesting event in itself and throws besides so much light on the nature of West Point friendship, that I will let the light-hearted and gallant Custer give his account of it as it appears in a letter to his sister: —

"I was at the residence of the bride long before the appointed hour. Both" — referring to the bride and her cousin, Maggie, the bridesmaid — "were dressed in white with a simple wreath of flowers upon their heads. I never saw two prettier girls. Lea was dressed in a bright new rebel uniform trimmed with gold lace; I wore my full uniform of blue. The minister arrived, and at nine we took our places upon the floor. L. made the responses in a clear and distinct tone. The bride made no response whatever except to the first question; she was evidently confused, though she afterwards said (laughing) that she neglected to respond purposely so as to be free from any obligations."

After the ceremony and greetings, he goes on, "Every one seemed happy except the young lady who had been my partner on the floor. She kissed the bride and sat down crying. Lea, observing this, said, 'Why, Cousin Maggie, what are you crying for? There is nothing to cry about. — Oh, I know. You are crying because you are not married; well, here is the minister

and here is Captain Custer, who I know would be glad to carry off such a pretty bride from the Confederacy.'

"She managed to reply, 'Captain Lea, you are just as mean as you can be.'"

On the way out to supper Custer observed banteringly to the bridesmaid that he could not see how so strong a secessionist as she could take the arm of a Union officer. She replied, "You ought to be in our army."

"I remained with Lea, or rather, at his father-in-law's house, for two weeks, and never had so pleasant a visit among strangers. Cousin Maggie would regale me by singing and playing on the piano, 'My Maryland,' 'Dixie,' 'For Southern Rights, Hurrah,' etc. We were all fond of cards and would play for the Southern Confederacy. When doing so Lea and I were the only players, while the ladies were spectators. He won, every time, when playing for the Confederacy, he representing the South, I the North. Lea has since been exchanged and is now fighting for what he supposes are his rights."

Custer is buried at West Point; I think the ashes of Lea should be brought back and laid at his side. And when the casket lands at the wharf from the New York boat, some one should lay a Confederate flag and two white wreaths over it, one for the bride and one for the brides-

maid. And then to the music of the band that he had marched after so often — I'm sure his soldier clay will keep step — he should be borne to the beautiful, restful West Point Cemetery. And as the coffin passes the flagstaff I can see the stars and stripes dipping instinctively in memory of the love of two cadets whose West Point friendship the bitterness of war could not destroy.

Among those who resigned in December, 1860, was Cadet Charles P. Ball of Alabama, a member of Custer's, Cushing's, and O'Rorke's class. For a while he was an aide on General Hardee's staff, and finally, after distinguished service at Vicksburg and elsewhere, was made colonel of the 12th Alabama Cavalry. Ball was one of those rare young men who carry with them the fascinating mystery of promise; a power which lies in silence, a steady, friendly eye, and that majesty which lights the face where there is absolute self-control; in other words, where nature has written leadership. He was popular, stood high in his studies, and was first sergeant of Co. A, — the preliminary step to the first captaincy, which is the most enviable position in the corps for a soldier. When he set off for home — after bidding the battalion good-by with manifest feeling — a number of his classmates bore him on their shoulders to the wharf.

Late one night, while on my way from Montgomery to Atlanta just after the war, the ramshackle train stopped at one of the lonely stations then in the sparsely settled, wooded country. Ball, still in Confederate gray, entered at the forward end of the dimly-lighted car in which I was practically alone. As soon as he recognized me, he quickened his step down the aisle and met me with such unaffected cordiality that in a moment the car seemed to glow with new lamps. I had not known him at all well at West Point. Moreover, the war had been so long and fiercely fought, the disappointment and desolation of the South so full and heavy, the future, once so bright, now offering nothing but a struggle with poverty, that had he merely bowed and passed on, I should not have felt hurt; for I realized how much there had been to embitter and to put out the fires of friendship.

Well, as I said before, there was new light in the car as he sat down and entered into conversation as though we had not been fighting, but had had some pleasant army experience together. He inquired in the kindliest way, not only for those who had borne him on their shoulders, the present Brigadier-General J. P. Farley and others, but for all his classmates and friends. Once, after a long pause, his eye meanwhile gazing out of the window through which the

WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS, THOMSON COTTAGE

primeval woods were gloomily and transiently visible, he said, "Well, Schaff, how happy those days were at old West Point!" Had he, during those silent moments, been listening once more to Bentz's bugle?

Morning was breaking when he parted from me at some little station near Loachapoka. I wonder whether, in case the South had conquered the North, in case I had had to make my way home in rags, say from Gettysburg, only to find as I came in sight of the old farm that not a rail was to be seen dividing the leaning fields; that there was nothing left of the old homestead but a pair of lone chimneys, the old hearth whose fires had so often blazed on happy faces black and vacant; to find that not a sheep nibbled up the slope towards the old oak stub where the little pigeon-hawk had built, and that even the old dog who used to dig so faithfully for me at the muskrat-holes, was gone, — I wonder, if such a sight had greeted me as greeted so many Southerners, whether I should have met Ball as Ball met me! Would I have shown so much of the magnanimity of the soldier and gentleman? I doubt it.

XVII

BREAKING OFF

It is not my desire or ambition to enter the field of the history of the war between the States. For many years, bands of laborers, all faithful and some brilliant, have toiled in it early and late. But that we may see West Point as it was, it must be viewed against the background of contemporary events.

As has been already noted, South Carolina seceded on the 20th of December. On the 26th, after night had fallen, Major Robert Anderson, a graduate and a Kentuckian, disturbed by the threatening attitude of local military companies, carried his command from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, Charleston Harbor. The next day, with colors in hand, he gathered his little garrison about the flagstaff. Then, uncovering and kneeling, he called on the chaplain to lead in prayer. It is said that the chaplain thanked God for their safe arrival in Sumter, and closed with an appeal of deep earnestness that peace and good will might prevail throughout the land. When the prayer was over, the Major rose from his knees and ran the colors up; and his old Regulars cheered as the flag unfurled at the top of the mast. What exultation there must have been that day among the flags of our coun-

try as one after another from fort, war-vessel, and garrison hailed Sumter.

The North, which had stood with knitted brow while South Carolina challenged the sovereignty of the country and had seen Buchanan meeting her vainglorious pretensions with sighs, now broke out into a loud, steel-clanging cheer as she saw the Kentuckian's loyalty and pluck.

But the roar of that Northern cheer had hardly died away when the Gulf States fell in behind Carolina. Mississippi seceded on the 9th of January, 1861, Florida on the 10th, Alabama on the 11th, Georgia on the 19th, Louisiana on the 26th, and Texas on February 1. Then there was a pause; no State broke from the ranks of the Union for over two months.

Meanwhile, not to be outdone by South Carolina in open defiance of the federal authority, her sister States hastened with banners flying, beating of drums, and much warlike formality to seize the United States Arsenals within their boundaries and the forts along their coasts. To be sure, there were no troops in the arsenals, only a single officer with a half-dozen enlisted men living on the sweetest terms of hospitality with the planters around them, while in most of the forts there was only an ordnance sergeant, whose duties were to renew the black lacquer on the cast-iron guns and the stately solemn piles

of cannon-balls, air the magazine, fire the customary gun in the morning and again when the sun went down, folding and putting away lovingly the flag which all of them in their younger days had followed bravely in the Mexican and Indian wars. A more peaceful attitude toward the institutions of the South than that of the simple-hearted sergeant and his sleepy fort, with its old barbette guns overlooking the tide-swinging channels, could scarcely be imagined; and yet there was great vaunting, a kind of fox-fire glory in the accounts of their capture, all of which reached us and West Point through the Southern papers.

But when my old instructor, Adam Slemmer, moved his company into Fort Pickens and defied the Alabamians to come and take it, we felt proud of him. In contrast with the nervelessness and uncertainty which prevailed at Washington, his conduct was inspiring and worthy of commemoration. And when I recall his unassertive manners and quiet gentleness, his frail form and the absence of all those proud characteristics of bearing, size, and address which determine who shall be adjutants, aides, and not unfrequently brigadier-generals, I am led to the conclusion of wiser men than myself, that the outward man is no index of greatness of soul. In other words, the world makes a mistake

when it denies to the inconspicuous form and naturally humble demeanor a mighty, beating heart, a heart as loyal to its own sovereignty as to its country. I have no doubt that Slemmer's and Anderson's display of duty, showing what a soldier owes to his government in trying days, had great influence on many of their fellow officers. At any rate I am sure that every one of us at West Point who had stood before the mild, unpretentious, and earnest-gazing Slemmer felt a thrill as we read of his brave conduct.

In marked contrast was the example of old Major-General Twiggs, commanding the Department of Texas. On the 18th of February, 1861, he surrendered every military port and all the property of the United States into the hands of the revolutionary State authorities. It was a shameful proceeding, and I am glad to record that he was not a graduate. His conduct was so inexcusably undutiful, if not treacherous, that it aroused the benumbed and haggard, faint and despairing Buchanan into sufficient mental activity and righteous wrath to designate him in a private letter as "a hoary-headed rebel." Then, unfortunately for his fame, Buchanan lapsed into his customary tearful state. And yet his heart was true.

With South Carolina and the Gulf States in open rebellion, the other Southern States on the

verge of following them out of the Union, the Government with no fixedness of purpose or resolution, the leading New York papers declaring that a State could not be coerced, tacking first one way and then the other through the fog, the New York "Tribune" (which had done more than all the other publications of the country or than any set of individuals to bring the North into a state of determined resistance to any further concessions to the South in the matter of slavery) announcing mournfully that rather than embroil the country in civil war it would let the erring sisters go in peace, with army and navy officers resigning, finally with war hanging, as it were, by a single thread, it is easy to realize in a measure at least how black and hopeless the future lay before us all at West Point. Not to cadets only, but to the officers and professors also. I have no knowledge of what was going on in the minds of any of them. But I do know that not a voice was raised; all were as silent as the Hudson or the big guns in the seacoast battery. In fact the only voice in all the land that rang out true, clear, and loud was that of General John A. Dix, who, as Secretary of the Treasury, telegraphed to an officer of a revenue cutter at New Orleans, "If any one attempts to haul down the American flag shoot him on the spot." That one bold and stirring

command was like striking a shield, and the iron in the blood of the indignant North clanged in response. But while it was as it were a burning flash, a flash like those which tear their way across the brows of darkly lumbering clouds, yet, as in their case, it was followed by deeper blackness.

What was going on meanwhile in the upper, overarching West Point I do not know; but I have no doubt there was seriousness in the open face of Honor when night after night she met Duty and Courage at the latter's hearth. Down in the little battalion of cadets we were only vaguely conscious of the nation's crisis; though to those of us who had Southern roommates every little while it drew near and we caught glimpses of its dark menace. So far as we could read the countenances of the officers over us, however, all was going well. Daily routine went on its way with drums, roll-calls, and recitations; the examination that is always held at the beginning of the year was as relentlessly rigorous as ever. During the release from quarters, when the recitations of the day ended, some would take a stroll around Flirtation Walk — beautiful and solemnly elevating, as through trees and from open spaces the eye fell on the river in the fading light of day, on the snow-covered, skyward-tending landscape and the worshiping hills

— all waiting in religious peace, for the coming of the night — how I should love to ramble along it once more! — a few would go over to the inspiriting silence of the library; a small number, poor victims of athletics, would wrestle with parallel bars, etc., in the gymnasium; but the larger number would congregate in the fencing-hall and dance to music by members of the band. How often I sat with Comly — for dancing was not among our accomplishments — and watched the mazing couples, Rosser and Pelham, "Cam" Emory and Ames, Chambliss and Hoxton, Kent and Beaumont, Haines and Cushing, Dearing and Gillespie, Dupont and Farquhar, and many, many others! Yes, that was the way we were passing the time in that January of 1861, on the verge of the Civil War.

Among the names I have just mentioned is that of Beaumont, whose ever sunny disposition brought cheer into West Point life. The last time I saw him was in Virginia during one of the campaigns; he was riding by with a column of cavalry. I am sure, to all who served with him, the mention of his name will recall his happy, kindly, dark eyes, and many a gleaming camp-fire. I hope that the reference to this pastime will bring back figures of dear friends to all the living, as it has brought them back to me. And I am sure also that as in their minds' eye

they go from the dancing-hall to the quarters on those midwinter nights, they will see the light in the guard-room across the area, and that officers of the day, with red sashes, plumed hats, and cheeks tinted with the dawn of youth, will step out of the dusky past.

What a flock of memories perch on that Commandant's office! How often every graduate (save the very good ones) has had to ascend the stairs, not always in a hopeful or prayerful mood, rap on the door, and meet the stony gaze of the colonel before whom lay the report for violations of discipline! Glorious old Records of '58 to '62, bearing our names in various reports at all too frequent intervals! I trust you are having a good time in your dreams among the archives.

There was one delinquency, recalled at this moment, one which never appeared on the Records, but which brings back that old "area," so associated with the fussiness of military life that I own to a feeling of satisfaction in recording the occasion when it was strewn with chicken feathers.

The feathers belonged to a buff rooster, the property of Lieutenant Douglas, whose quarters and garden lay below my window in the 7th, and below Custer's, who lived in the tower-room of the 8th Division. We enjoyed seeing chanticleer as he led his little flock proudly around the

garden after the vegetables were harvested, and hearing him crow defiantly from the top of the fence to all the roosters down the line of the professors' quarters. And many and many a time at night, too, he brought to our minds the roosting flocks in the willows and locusts at home. But he crowed too often. Custer slipped down one night, took him from his perch, and later he was in a kettle boiling over the gas-burner, his feathers on an outspread newspaper. When the feast was over, the one delegated to dispose of the feathers was not careful as he carried them off, and the result was that the next morning there was a string of yellow feathers from the 8th Division clear across the "area."

This delinquency, not recorded in the Military Academy's Records, helped to break the routine, offering a pleasant relief and contrast at a time when clouds hung dark and passions were stirring deep. West Point has had many a character to deal with; but it may be a question whether it ever had a cadet so exuberant, one who cared so little for its serious attempts to elevate and burnish, or one on whom its tactical officers kept their eyes so constantly and unsympathetically searching as upon Custer. And yet how we all loved him; and to what a height he rose!

The fate of Lieutenant Douglas's rooster in

that January of 1861 is not, I acknowledge, of great historic importance in the life of West Point, nor is the claim made that it has anything to do with the Civil War. But who that has ever followed a wood road along the windings of a brook, up the steep side, say, of one of the Berkshire hills, has not stopped while time has gone by unheeded to look down with boyish interest where a partridge has wallowed or parted with a feather in the dust; has not loitered to catch a glimpse through the low second-growth beeches of a hermit thrush or some shy, elusive chewink?

During the month of January there were only two resignations: Wofford of South Carolina and Felix H. Robertson, swarthy "Comanche," of Texas. But on the 23d of the month occurred an incident of historic importance in the life of the Military Academy. On that day Beauregard of Louisiana, then a major of engineers, later so prominent as a general in the Confederacy, a small, dapper man with noticeably olive complexion and French features, relieved Major Delafield as superintendent of the Academy. On the 28th, five days later, and before the post was formally turned over to him, Beauregard was relieved by order of the Secretary of War, and Delafield resumed command.

There were many surmises concerning the

reasons for this summary action on the part of the Secretary. But the one founded on the doubt of Beauregard's loyalty seems to me the most probable; for the stream of resignations pouring into the War Department would naturally raise the question of the loyalty of every Southern army officer.

In view of what took place during his short occupancy as the head of West Point, his removal was amply justified, although in all probability the Secretary was without specific knowledge of the incident I am going to relate. A cadet from Louisiana, which, as already stated, had seceded, went to the hotel where Beauregard was then staying and consulted him as to whether or not he should resign. When the cadet returned to the barracks his roommate asked, "What did he tell you to do?"

"He said, 'Watch me; and when I jump, you jump. What's the use of jumping too soon?'"

The cadet's roommate, a Southerner whose career has been one of honor and great service to his country, observed, "What a thing for the Superintendent to say!" And so say I.

Upon receipt of the order relieving him, Beauregard departed. And, as he passed the light battery, the library, and the chapel, with all of its heroic associations, on his way to the wharf, is it unkind to wonder whether he heard any

Hail and Farewell! from his old Alma Mater? On the 8th of February he "jumped." In less than thirty-five days after leaving West Point he was in command at Charleston; and, by his order, on the 12th of April, the shot was fired which opened the war.

His career in the army of the South brings into view that relentless band, the lean, solemn children of Nemesis who execute the decrees of their cold-eyed mother; and one of those decrees was uttered, I think, when he put his foot on West Point soil, with his heart made up to desert the country — "Beauregard, you shall win no permanent glory." He fought three battles of grave importance: at Bull Run he failed to reap the fruits of victory; at Shiloh, Fate intervened against him through the death at the critical moment of Albert Sidney Johnston, and the dissipation of one of his division commanders cost him complete victory at Drury's Bluff. Contention characterized the end of his days. And now, while the stars of his fellow generals are burning so brightly in the Confederate galaxy, his, which has always been alone, is dimming.

The day after his departure — or, should I say, desertion — there was another departure from West Point. The path in this case led where stars do not dim and where the last days of old age are not wearied by contention. At

reveille on the 31st, Griffin's trumpet sounded the advance of the West Point Battery, and the old battery, every gun a personal friend, set off for the field of glory. How my heart lifts as I recall the scene when we gathered in front of the barracks! Over the library the fading moon lay pale in the outstretched arms of the elms; and the open, immortal eyes of the East were full of dawn, as the dear old guns rolled by. Three cheers broke for the West Point Battery. And out of its granite heart the stern, battlemented barracks threw them off well — over the plain and up into the folds of the crimsoning flag — over the plain and off into the hills. Proud morning, proud and glorious ending! We followed them with warm eyes till they turned toward the west gate, Griffin riding with a firm and loyal heart at the head.

Good-by, old battery! We know that Revolutionary Fort Putnam watched you from her height with pride, and that every laurel blooming around her ruins flushed and waved its boughs as you wound out and on.

"Good-by till we meet again!" shouted back the guns. It was not until the Wilderness that we did meet. Oh, I do not know why it is; but my heart beats so loudly, and there is a mist gathering over the paper — perhaps it hears the guns again.

But February had barely begun before a number resigned. Among them was Williams of Tennessee, known as "Susan," and John O'Brien, a son, I believe, of the graduate Captain O'Brien, distinguished in the Mexican War and referred to in one of the stanzas of "Benny Havens." I believe this is the first time I have mentioned this old West Point song and it brings back many memories. Although neither in poetry nor in music was it much of a song, yet time had consecrated it, and we sang it with fervor, now in our quarters, and now in the twilight of camp.

One night in 1863, when we were moving to Mine Run on what is known as the Mine Run Campaign, the head of the column of light batteries, whose commander, the well-known and truly gallant William Montrose Graham, I was serving as a temporary aide, halted on the verge of the steep banks of the Rapidan, owing to some trouble at the pontoon bridge below us. The river, mentioned so often in the histories of the war, had cut at this point a narrow and deep valley, and on that late autumn night, level from bank to bank through the timbered hills, lay a dense gray mist suffused with the light of a moon waning to its last quarter. Some one struck up the old song, and it was taken up from battery to battery, and sweet its notes sounded as they

rose and fell, and died away through the still woods.

The willows, the oaks, and the elms were in their fresh early green when for the first and the only time I saw Benny Havens. He was bent and his hair was snowy white; he was in shirt-sleeves and wore a scarlet vest. The Hudson, his boyhood companion, ran close by his humble door and, with a music of its own and a song older than "Benny Havens," was flowing on to the sea. He died in 1877, May 29, aged 89 years. I trust that Benny Havens and every cadet who ever "ran" it to his cheering are sleeping well. For the sake of days gone by I introduce the last three stanzas of the old song.

From the courts of death and danger, from Tampa's deadly shore,
There comes a wail of manly grief, "O'Brien is no more";
In the land of sun and flowers his head lies pillowed low,
No more he'll sing "Petite Coquille," or Benny Havens, oh!

Oh! Benny Havens, oh! Oh! Benny Havens, oh!
So we'll sing our reminiscences of Benny Havens, oh!

To our comrades who have fallen, one cup before we go,
They poured their life-blood freely out *pro bono publico;*
No marble points the stranger to where they rest below,
They lie neglected far away from Benny Havens, oh!

Oh! Benny Havens, oh! etc.

When you and I, and Benny, and all the others, too,
Are called before the "final board" our course of life to view,

May we never "fess" [1] on any point, but straight be told to go
And join the Army of the Blest at Benny Havens, oh!

Oh! Benny Havens, oh! etc.

Few more graceful or more popular or more polished men than O'Brien have worn the cadet uniform.

Besides the foregoing, who resigned in early February, was "Ned" Willis, already mentioned, and Barrow of my class, both from Georgia. I have often wondered what became of the latter. He was a roommate, I believe, at one time of that other classmate, James Dearing of Virginia, who was mortally wounded at High Bridge a few days before Lee's surrender. Meanwhile, resignations of officers, old and tried, were still pouring in from the army and navy. It must have looked dark for our country; and it is not strange that the President's heart grew heavy. The following order attests the state of his mind and his effort to arouse the loyalty of the people by appealing to their veneration for Washington: —

HEADQUARTERS, MILITARY ACADEMY,
WEST POINT, NEW YORK,
February 21st, 1861.

Orders No. 2.

In compliance with the proclamation of the President of the United States, the Officers and

[1] "Fess," a contraction of confess, — that the cadet at recitation knows nothing about the subject; in other words, complete failure.

Professors on duty at this Post will assemble at 11.30 A. M. on the 22d instant in the Chapel, to commemorate the *birth of Washington*, and to listen to the friendly counsels, and almost prophetic warnings, contained in his "*Farewell Address to his Countrymen.*"

All Academic duty will be suspended at 11 A. M., and at 11.30 the Companies of Cadets with side-arms only, accompanied by the Band, will be marched to the Chapel for the purposes before mentioned.

By order of Colonel Bowman:

EDWD. C. BOYNTON,
Captain & Adjutant.

When the hour came the column was formed by platoons. The late Fitzhugh Lee, in command of Co. A, the late Major-General Alexander McD. McCook of B, Robert Williams of C, and the late Major-General Hazen of our company, D; the Commandant, the iron-hearted John F. Reynolds, killed at Gettysburg, in command of the battalion. With the band playing we marched to the little chapel, where all the professors, their families, and the officers on duty, in full uniform, had gathered. Our side-arms consisted of a belt and bayonet. A conspicuous feature of the uniform at that time was the dignified and imposing epaulettes. Perhaps

it is due entirely to early association, perhaps to a boy's admiration or to the impression left on a youthful mind by the pictures of the death of Nelson and Wolfe and many other heroes, at all events the brilliant epaulettes suggest much more stateliness than the insignificant knots and badges of to-day. But after all it really makes no difference to the graduates whether there are knots or epaulettes on their shoulders; the country may feel sure that by their courage they will honor whatsoever badge the Government decrees that they shall wear.

On our arrival at the chapel the colors were advanced to the altar, and the band filed up to its usual place in the choir-loft. I have taxed my memory over and over again to recall who read the address, and to revive the impressions left by it, and made inquiries from many of my friends of that day, but in vain. For some reason only faint tinges here and there in the canvas of our memories are left of that reverent ceremony.

But the other night, while I sat late and alone before a wood-fire (the ancestors of the oak burning softly on the hearth heard the guns of the Revolution from Dorchester Heights), I read the Farewell Address of Washington for the first time since I heard it on the 22d of February, 1861, in the little chapel. And I must say

that as I came to some of its passages, passages like this: "It is of infinite moment that you shall properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness — that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts," — I wondered what was their effect as they fell on the ears of Fitzhugh Lee, Field, and all the other Virginians and Southerners then debating whether or not they would throw in their fortunes with the Confederacy.

While I pondered the situation, with its intense historic and personal interest, the Confederacy mounted the stage at Montgomery; the life of the country once more hung in the balance; and the very air of the room was filled with the foreboding of that day. Before my vision dark phantasmal scenes, one after another, grew and spread; and when they were on the point of dissolving into ultimate gloom the interior of the little chapel suddenly appeared, filled with a heavenly light. There we were again, cadets blooming

in youth, officers, and sage professors. The reader is progressing with the Farewell Address, and now comes one of the appealing passages, and I lift my eye to the walls where hang the tablets bearing the names of the Revolutionary generals; and, behold! faces begin to appear in the shields. The first is that of the youthful Hamilton, a member of Washington's military family; and now one after another they all become alive, Greene and Lincoln, the Lees and Morgan. Oh, they hear their great leader's voice once more, and they know from its tones that there is peril for the country they love! The grave cannot hold them back, they burst through the marble of the tablets and rally loyally to his standard. And now what is breathing through the colors that were won at Saratoga and on the plains of Mexico? for their folds begin to creep. They, too, have heard the trumpet and are freshening, ready to swirl on the field again, — even the brass guns near them in the wall have roused from their years of dreaming slumber and are turning on their trunnions.

But look up into the field of the inspired painting over the chancel. What significant movement is that of the Roman soldier? Southerners, see how he grasps the sword for the defense of the state, and look at that resolute face. (I saw Grant's face at Spottsylvania when three lines

of battle were moving up under Upton, and it wore that same look.) And, lo! tears are streaming down the cheek of Peace as the olive branch trembles in her hand. And what is stirring the stars in the sky over her? Do they hear and see a procession? Yes, from the deep spaces back of the sphere of the world comes the song of "Peace on earth, good will toward men." The stars make way. And now appears a glorified procession of winged creatures bearing the beautiful countenances of angels. Three abreast they waft downward to the left, and three abreast to the right to make the circuit of the sanctuary. At the door they meet and move up over the battalion. What breadth of "gladsome wing," what raptured brows, what imperishable coloring; what girdles, what wavering robes of light, what unconscious grace of movement! Finally, what vivified images of the heart's longing for eternal beauty! Behold, the genius of the Republic has joined them, and she has wreaths in her hand, and as they pass Reynolds, one falls on him. And now they hover over the boys in gray while wreaths swirl lovingly down on Kirby, O'Rorke, Cushing, Sanderson, Woodruff, and many another. Oh! little chapel, they may level you to the earth, they may supplant you with a structure of imposing solemnity, but you have been the tabernacle of West Point; from

you the glory that shines about her has had its splendor!

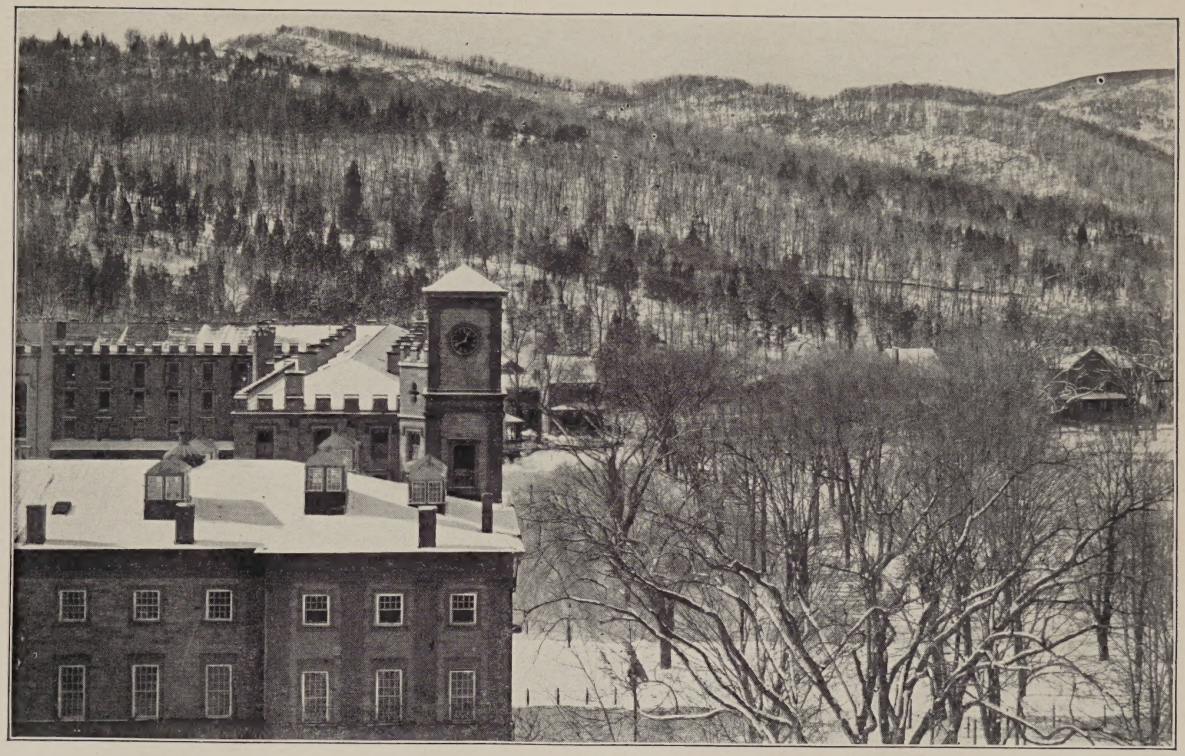
After the ceremony there was a holiday for the rest of the 22d. It was the custom on that day, and it may be so still, for the full band to take the place of the drum corps at tattoo. When the hour came, it formed as usual near the morning gun and set out across the Plain toward barracks, playing Washington's March. The band was large and its prevailing instruments were brass, pouring forth their tones, now with high defiant clearness, now with resounding depth, and now with lamenting pathos.

It was a soft, heavily clouded night, and when the band was drawing near, its notes becoming clearer and clearer as it advanced across the Plain, a number — in fact almost every one — in D Company gathered at the open windows fronting the area. Just before the band passed under the elms which front the barracks it struck up the "Star-Spangled Banner," and came swinging proudly through the Sally Port. I never have heard such a burst of music as at that moment, when it freed the granite arch. Had Duty, Honor, and Courage, had old West Point herself and every Revolutionary ruin called to the spirits, "Go, join the band and breathe our love for the land into every note! Go, for the sake of Peace! Go, for the sake of

the impulsive, generous-hearted South itself! Go, for the hopes of the world!"

I was at a window on the third floor of the 8th Division, with Custer, Elbert, and possibly Sanderson. In the room across the hall were a number of Southerners, and immediately below them on the second floor were Rosser, Young, Watts, Williams, Faison, and Thornton, Dresser of Massachusetts, and others opposite. Every room fronting the area was aglow, every window up and filled with men. With the appearance of the band at the Sally Port a thundering cheer broke, and, upon my soul! I believe it was begun at our window by Custer, for it took a man of his courage and heedlessness openly to violate the regulations.

But the cheer had barely struck the air before the Southerners followed it with a cheer for "Dixie." Our 7th and 8th Divisions formed an ell, so that from them the rear of the four-storied barracks, the Sally Port and its battlemented towers, were in full view, and a cheer from our quarter for "Dixie" raked the entire line. Beyond the Sally Port, in A and B Companies, were the majority of the Northerners; and they flung back a ringing cheer for the stars and stripes; and so cheer followed cheer. Ah, it was a great night! Rosser at one window, Custer at another. A few years later they faced



OLD ACADEMIC BUILDING AND BARRACKS, FROM LIBRARY TOWER, 1860

each other again and again in cavalry battles; and when poor Custer lay at last on the field of the Little Big Horn, Rosser, then in the employ of the Northern Pacific Railroad, was among the first to volunteer to go to the rescue of his body. Rosser was a good and great fighter. He is a good and a warm friend. May the sunset of his life be soft and clear.

I have written the close of this chapter on the afternoon of the 22d of February, 1907, forty-six years after the day whose events I have tried to record. I am conscious of deep feeling; and perhaps I ought more than once in this chapter to have drawn both curb and snaffle, as one scene after another has broken on my mind; but I hope that the patriotic associations of the day, and all the sacred memories that have gathered about it, will mellow the critical spirit in my readers.

XVIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

MEANWHILE, all eyes were turned on the Old Dominion, and very naturally. For Virginia had been looked up to with veneration by all her sister colonies; she had been the guide, defender, counselor, and friend of them all. She was especially dear to a great portion of the early settlers of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, who had passed their childhood within her borders. They were proud of her history and loved her. Moreover, all the territory of their homes, all the land north of the Ohio, now the heart of the country, she had ceded with her customary amplitude to the Government.

I do not believe the world will ever know the suffering and the anguish of the high-minded old Commonwealth. She had rocked the Union in its cradle; she had contributed Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, the Lees, and Masons to steer it through the dangers of war, and John Marshall to lead it on, on, up through weakness, inexperience, and trial, to a proud height. And now, in her sorrow, she called for a Peace Conference, in the hope that war might be averted. It met in Washington on February 4. On the same day in Montgomery, Alabama, delegates from the seceded States met to form

a Nation. The Peace Conference adjourned the 27th without accomplishing anything; the convention at Montgomery launched the Confederacy.

It is perfectly obvious now that the Peace Conference was doomed to failure. Let no time be wasted in seeking for the reasons. They lie deep in the nature of man, in the difference between aristocracy and the masses, in the arrogance of the former and the latent hate and jealousy of the latter, in the irreconcilable animosity between Freedom and Slavery, and above all, in that inexorable march which the world calls civilization. But we, who were in the midst of the events themselves, could not see things then as we see them now. The people resorted to the usual means: petitions bearing the names of thousands were sent to Washington, imploring Congress to save the country from war, — one of them had the names of fourteen thousand women on it. To give us back our old-time love for each other, prayers went up morning, noon, and night, from firesides North and South; and on many a tongue was the language of David: "Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man." But the cloud of war was over us and it was too late to ward off our trials.

Day after day South Carolina added to the

height and strength of her batteries bearing on Sumter, and an orgy of wild, frenzied, delirious cheering hailed every step toward revolution. Meanwhile, the Southern Confederacy at Montgomery, elated by the extended hand of Europe, and blind to the hollow treachery of her smile, began to drink deeply of the cups of fate, and grew more and more defiant, leaving no doubt of war in the minds of whosoever observed her almost savage glee over the prospect of a death-grapple with the North. How little she dreamed in her new, shining, and rustling robes that her pall was weaving in the deep silence of the North! Oh, what sarcasm there is in the irony of fate.

I wish that my pen was in the hand of some one who is on such terms with words — those immortal heralds of thought which at the touch of genius become radiant — that at a beck from him they would step out from their ranks, and marshal themselves, to convey to the reader born since the war a true, deeply calm, and spiritually informing vision of those days; of how they looked to us and to eyes that had seen much more of the world than ours. For just think for a moment what mighty elements were involved! Civilization and the Republic moving on to their destiny under the impulse of God's holy purposes, black smoke pouring

out of the chimneys of public opinion, showing that the Fates were firing up; the land overhung with the clouds of war, their inky abysses lit up from time to time by quick, angrily swerving flashes, followed by dull outbursts of thunder muttering into a foreboding silence. Conscious of my incapacity to transfigure the scene I turn away with a sigh. For I would like to set it forth as it was — not only to gratify a longing to give as complete expression as Providence has vouchsafed me to give of what appeals to my heart, but much more, to instruct, enlighten, and mercifully to soften future judgment on the conduct of all, of North and South, in whatsoever one or the other did that was wrong. But I know full well that in due time, and for all time, it will at last have its interpreter, and take its place among the fountains of inspiration.

On the 4th of March, 1861, Lincoln, born in a cabin, tutored by no school or college, a listener to voices now from the shore of thought, now from the heights of our better nature, disciple of Patience, and Humor's boon companion, was inaugurated President. No message was ever looked forward to as was his, nor with such anxiety. But it rose calmly and firmly to the level of the situation, and I doubt if a Southerner can now read it and find a substantial reason for interpreting it as threatening a single right

of a State in the Union. It closed with the well-known and oft-quoted appeal which, notwithstanding its familiarity, I will repeat once more, because it holds that immortal quality which uplifts the heart and spreads the wings of the imagination: —

"Physically speaking, we cannot separate. . . . In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourself the aggressors. . . . We are not enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Notwithstanding this pacific message, look where you would, the sky was growing darker. Inflamed by passionate oratory and lashed by an invective press, the South lost its reason completely, and more and more madly craved for war. Virginia was straining at her mooring, for the waves of rebellion were rising. All now depended on her; but her anchors still held, their flukes deep in the heart of the Union.

Massachusetts, however, with that foresight for which she has ever been famous, was getting her troops ready; and day by day, to North and South, the conflict became more and more visible and inevitable.

Of course, West and myself talked the state of affairs over and over again, sometimes long after "taps" had sounded, and the only light in the room was that of the stars, or the moon. It meant so much for him: and more than once he broke out into the bitterest denunciation of all fire-eaters and abolitionists. His Congressman was his fellow townsman of Madison, Georgia, — Honorable Joshua Hill, — and if the proceedings in Congress be consulted, it will be found that he was among those who tried to hold the South back from precipitating war. West's letters from his family were all of a peaceful tenor, too, brimming with fear and misgiving for the outcome — and they were not the only letters filled with care and dread and sorrow in the Southland. Early in March the papers of his State published a list of the officers of the new, or prospective forces of Georgia, and his name and those of all the other Georgia cadets appeared in the lists.

On the 11th of March the cadets from Georgia had a meeting, and when my roommate came back from it, he told me with sadness that he

had resigned. On the same day Pierce Young, "Joe" Blount, and "Joe" Alexander, all of Georgia, handed in their resignations. General Young has been mentioned; Blount and Alexander were both of my class, and both were very dear friends. The former lived on the same floor with me, and many were the pleasant hours we passed together, and I associate him with one very funny thing — at least, its remembrance amuses me — that used to take place in that angle. It so happened that Blount, West, Comly, "Jim" Drake, and three or four others of my closest friends, were in the "immortals," — the last section in French, — and their preparation for recitation consisted in gathering in our room, about five minutes before the bugle blew, and having me translate the reading-lesson. If I read over the "Benefactor Recompensed" to that crowd once, I read it a dozen times. If any one were to stop me with an inquiry, "How's that, Morris?" or, "What's that, Schaff?" he would be squelched immediately by all the others exclaiming indignantly, "Oh, for God's sake! what's the use of stopping him for that! Go on, Morris, *go on!* the bugle will blow in a minute"; and on would go the translator. Dear, dear fellows! I believe one and all of you are Immortals now, far, far above the reach of any earthly bugle.

In due time came the packing of West's trunk, and one after another of his things we laid away in it, as boys will pack a trunk. When the hour came for his departure he went and said good-by to all of his close friends, returning with moist eyes. And while he was out of the room I stood at my window. Below me lay Douglas's Garden, and beyond rose the hills, their rocky ribs partially hid by cedars and stunted forest trees. I can see them all now as I wondered whether I should ever have so close a friend again; for until I knew him well — I made friends slowly — a deep sense of loneliness would come over me at intervals as a cadet, a longing for something, and I suppose that something was a friend.

When the hour of parting came, I went with him to the cadet limits near the library, and I do not believe there was a word said by either one of us as together we walked side by side for the last time. And now we were at the end. He threw his arms around me and almost sobbed, "God bless you, Morris." "Farewell, dear John." Soon he disappeared down the roadway to the landing. I waited. The little ferryboat set out for Garrison's, and soon I saw a figure waving a handkerchief, and I fluttered mine. And those little colors of boyhood's love floated till the river was crossed; then his came

down and he disappeared forever from my view. Oh, find your way alone as well as you can, dear pen; you and the paper are both dim, for there is a deep mist in my eyes.

West died long ago — but from a leaning field of shocked wheat that faces a setting sun my heart is beckoning to me. What is it, Heart? "As long as I beat, in me the friend of your youth shall live."

West left on March 12, and on April 12 South Carolina opened her batteries on Fort Sumter, and the war began. Those thirty days at West Point, and, for that matter, everywhere, were days of portent. It is true we were mere boys, but, nevertheless, we were more or less conscious of the country's impending trial; for like a mighty cross it threw a shadow over all the land. And I wonder if I may say that, as in imagination I put myself back under that shadow, a feeling of deep awe comes over me as one after another of the mighty forces getting ready for the struggle of four years are dimly revealed. And as with every beat of imagination's wings, they break with more and more clearness, — it really seems as if I could hear the lull on the shores of "the isle that is called Patmos," — there is a great temptation to let this pen tell what it sees. But those mystic transfigurations embracing the country, pale and hesitating on

the threshold of a starry course: Liberty, standing between the pillars of the world's hope, her eyes filled with a lofty innocence, the smoke of sacrificial altars that look so like winding-sheets; Slavery on a waste that spreads far and wide facing her end under a sullen sky, — for she knows that the days of her course are numbered, — the sunbursts of glory on those West Point men and on every man in whose breast the bird is singing, — but however vivid and true all this may be, they belong to the domain of Poetry and not to Prose. And, yet, whenever a new furrow is plowed in one of its old fields, so closely lies the province of prose to that of poetry in the kingdom of art, the plowman is very apt to turn up the seeds of a celestial flower that has blown across the line. However this may be, whosoever wishes to enjoy a poet's vision of those days, let him read "In State," by Forceythe Wilson.

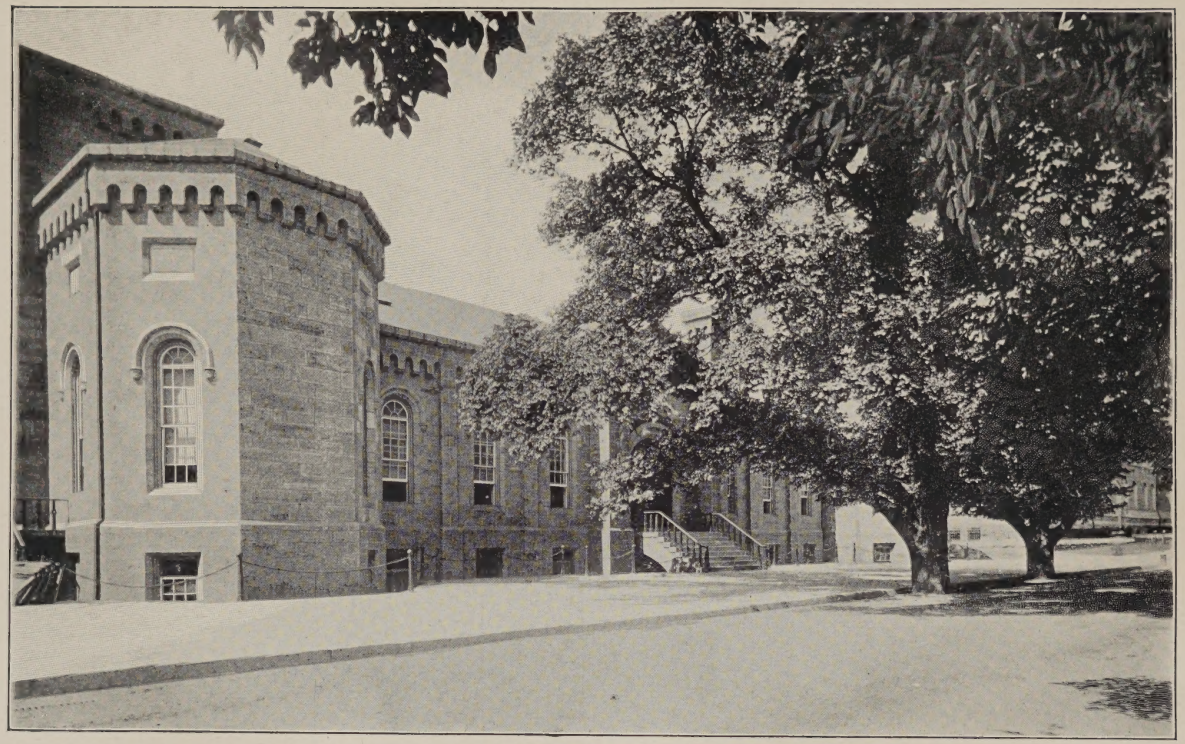
The news of the firing on Sumter reached West Point some time between eight and half-past nine in the morning. For when my section was dismissed at half-past nine, the area was spotted with cadets talking anxiously about it. Who the first one was to communicate the news to me I am not right sure, but my impression is that it was either Custer, or Elbert of Iowa; but, at any rate, I recall just where I was, a little

beyond the guard-house toward the Eighth Division. It is only necessary to refer to the New York papers of that morning to learn of the excitement that swept the country; probably its like no future generation will ever feel.

That whole livelong day we thought of and talked of nothing else; and here let me quote from a letter received from Tully McCrea, to whom I am indebted for many refreshing memories in the preparation of this book.

"When the news of the firing on Fort Sumter was received the effect was instantaneous, every Northern cadet now showed his colors and rallied that night in Harris's room in the Fifth Division. One could have heard us singing 'The Star Spangled Banner' in Cold Spring. It was the first time I ever saw the Southern contingent cowed. All of their Northern allies had deserted them, and they were stunned."

It may seem strange, but I do not remember that patriotic gathering in Harris's room, and for the very good reason that I was not present. Where or with whom I was that night has gone completely from my memory. Had I been with them, something tells me that their voices would be ringing now in my memory. No, I was not there; but where I was or what I was thinking about while they were singing, heaven only knows. Was I with one of the stunned South-



CADET MESS, "GRANT HALL"

erners — a number left by way of Albany the next morning for fear of being mobbed in New York? Perhaps, perhaps.

The New York newspapers which reached the Point between eight and nine in the morning gave every particular of the bombardment as it went on, the shells bursting over the Fort, the buildings burning, the smoke surging angrily up over the flagstaff, and then, smitten by a south wind, driven hot with its cinders into the perspiring, begrimed faces of the resolute gunners. We knew that the little garrison was practically without food, and wondered if the loyal Kentuckian and his Regulars could hold out much longer. And when we read that, the flagstaff having been shot down, Sergeant Hart secured a little spar, nailed the flag to it, and hoisted it again over the stormy parapet, how our hearts beat! Officers of the Regular Army, let us keep in tender memory our first sergeants, for they were closer to us than we or they knew. For we know well that no company ever honors its commander in peace-times or war, except through its first sergeant. I know what it is to have and to lose a good first sergeant. When the Confederates destroyed my ordnance depot at City Point by exploding a torpedo in it, August, 1864, killing over one hundred and fifty persons and about half of my detachment, I found my

first sergeant, Harris, who had been so faithful, lying dead under the timbers of the great wharf building. A child asleep in a cradle or in a mother's lap could not have worn a sweeter or more innocent face as he lay with eyes closed, at rest: a more faithful man never served his country. Gallant and grim old fellows — the law made a difference between us: you had to stand uncovered in our presence, you had to go at our bidding, no social or unstudied word could pass between us; but we knew, when the colors went forward, that there was no difference then between us, no difference as we met the final test of our courage and manliness. Your steadying voice, your stern "Forward, Company ——"; your encouraging "Stand up to it, men," as the shells burst in your faces; your "Let's take those colors, men," "Pick up the captain tenderly, corporal, and carry him back, but right on, Regulars!" Oh, first sergeants! Heroes, makers of armies, winners of victory, I hope that every officer who draws a sword in your presence will be just and kind, and give you the honor you deserve. While I am writing these lines, a voice comes to me from every field I saw from Chancellorsville to Petersburg, and now comes one closer and dearer than all, — that of West Point herself, saying, "For the sake of their manliness, for the sake of their courage and de-

votion to duty, let them stand with me in the light of your little lamp as long as it burns on your page."

And now from tattered colors comes another voice: "Pray do not forget the men who bore us, the color sergeants." Dear old banners! I have not forgotten those men, with daring, lofty countenances, who bore you: they have passed through the gates, and there is on their faces the transfiguring light that comes from the sense that they bore you well. You or they have no need for my little lamp; poetry and art have lit their eternal lamps all along the line for you and them.

The relation of a West Point officer to a sergeant, the following incident, perhaps, will illustrate well. When Grant came to Watertown Arsenal just after the war, Corporal or Sergeant Hunt of the detachment came to me and said that he would like a chance to speak to the General, that he had served in the same regiment with him before the war. I told him to come along, and took him into the office, where Grant was talking with the commandant, Colonel Charles P. Kingsbury of North Carolina. Mrs. Grant and Secretary of War Stanton — it was the only time I ever saw him — were standing near by.

"I do not know whether you remember me or not, General. I was with you at Fort Vancouver, Oregon, before the war — Corporal Hunt

of Captain ——s company," said the old soldier.

Grant reached out his hand and in his quiet voice said, "Sergeant, I remember you well"; — and there was that simple, honest, cordial look in Grant's face which never belied the warmth of his heart when he met a friend.

To resume the narrative, it will be remembered that the bombardment of Sumter was carried on for over thirty hours, the hungry little garrison not only fighting the fire of the burning buildings, but replying, bravely, first to this and then to that battery and fort which were pouring shot and shell into them. The effect on the country of those thirty hours of savage attack on a little garrison which had done no wrong to any one, is a matter of history. The North rose to its feet, and, pushing aside every fear of poor mortality, pain, hunger, weariness, and every fear of death itself, picked up the challenge.

It was a great political blunder on the part of the South to strike the first blow. Crawford says that the first shot burst right over the centre of Fort Sumter. Yes, but it burst in the heart of every Northerner, too. It was fired from a mortar battery in Fort Johnson at 4.30 A.M., April 12, 1861: the stars were paling and the sea was calm.

That fated missile bears a close relation to

West Point in this narrative, for it was fired by the hand of Wade Hampton Gibbes — the Gibbes whose historic encounter with Upton has already been mentioned. It was a strange coincidence that he should be in the first distinctively political combat at West Point, and the Southerner to open the war, the first to send a shot at the flag of his country, a flag that had "covered both sections with glory and protection." But a bird or a squirrel will carry an acorn, or a hickory-nut to the top of some bald, soaring ridge; there it will grow, — very like its only companions a few grim boulders brooding over eons of time, — and there in solemn, autumnal loneliness it will spread its leafless limbs against a fading sky. So, it seems to me, Gibbes stands against the twilight sky of the Confederacy, at the very front of the stage in the first scene of the tragedy of the war between the States, while, wrapped in their winding-sheets far below in the shadowed valleys of oblivion, his gallant contemporaries lie in peace. Oh, the futures, and, too often, the hardships of the children born to the hearth of fate!

On Sunday, the 14th, Anderson marched out, after saluting the flag he had defended so well, and on Monday, the 15th, Lincoln called for 75,000 men. Within forty-eight hours Massachusetts men, equipped and armed, were on

their way. It was obvious to every one in close social relations with the South, or who had studied the political situation, that all depended now on Virginia, for let her stand fast and the Confederacy must collapse. Only one or two of her cadets had resigned. Field and Fitz-Hugh Lee were still on duty as officers, and a number of cadets from North Carolina, Tennessee, Maryland, and elsewhere in the South, were holding on, and, among them were, perhaps, my closest friends, awaiting her decision. But, on the 22d, the Old Dominion slipped her anchors and headed straight for the tempest of rebellion. And with her went all of her sons at the Academy, and, except a very few, every one from the South.

XIX

AT THE CROSSING OF THE WAYS

In view of the immediately controlling influence of Virginia's course in determining that of her cadets and graduates as well as that of so many others from her sister Southern States, it seems to me a fitting time to recognize, and, as well as I can, to answer an inquiry, of whose presence in the minds of some of my readers, and especially in the minds of those who have been born since the war, I have been conscious from the day this narrative recorded or foreshadowed the resignations of West Point men to join the Confederacy. A passing survey of historic facts and a due, unimpassioned consideration of circumstances may, in part at least, answer the inquiry. That a survey of some kind should be made is not only fair to the young reader, but is only fair moreover to the Southerners, and, above all, to West Point itself.

It is a matter of history that each and all of the original Colonies claimed and, within their boundaries, exercised an undisputed sovereignty. It is a matter of history also that after they had formed the nation individual States, both North and South, now and again threatened to exercise their original sovereignty and withdraw from the Union when under the

conviction that their welfare was seriously and permanently endangered by national legislation. With the unification of their interests this theory of State sovereignty became more and more potential and preponderant in the Southern States, and it was their fatal mistake at last to invoke its mighty and solemn power in behalf of an institution that stood condemned in the eyes of civilization the world over. For it is inconceivable that this question was left unsettled by the providence of God in the minds of the framers of the Constitution, with a view to the preservation of slavery; rather is it not more reasonable to believe it was left for the ultimate preservation of man's natural rights, a citadel for our own common safety? For I am no more sure of my existence than I am that when the moral cowardice of wealth takes the place of courage and manly innocence, when the cries of the weak and the poor are not heard, when the love of peace is usurped by a spirit of conquest, and dissoluteness banishes wisdom and righteousness, the last rallying-point of Democracy — the simple, honest, and upright Democracy of our forefathers — against those tyrannies which a centralized government will exercise, will be on the theory of the sovereignty of the States. Be this, however, as it may, in the North, long before the breaking-out of the war, this theory had been

smothered by the growth of commercial interests, and, as the relations between freedom and slavery became more and more irreconcilable and more and more the dawning consciousness of the destiny of the country as a nation began to deck the future, it became not only latent but hateful in a great measure to the North.

Meanwhile, however, it remained green at West Point, and for reasons which may be traced back to several sources: to the Academy's isolation from the commercial life of the country, to its inherited Colonial conservatism, and to the masterful predominance of Southern social and political influences. But there is another reason which seems to me to account more directly for its vitality at West Point in my time. I refer to the influence of a text-book on the Constitution, by William Rawle of Philadelphia, a jurist of national reputation, at one time a United States district attorney, to whom, it is claimed, Washington offered the attorney-generalship.

Without qualification Rawle[1] maintained, "It

[1] On July 1, 1886, Jefferson Davis wrote to Hon. R. T. Bennett, late Colonel of the 13th North Carolina Infantry, a judge of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, and the Confederacy's calmest yet most profoundly eloquent memorialist, "*Rawle on the Constitution* was the text-book at West Point, but when the class of which I was a member entered the graduating year Kent's *Commentaries* were introduced as the text-book on the Constitution and International Law. Though not so decided

depends on the State itself to retain or abolish the principle of representation, because it depends on itself whether it will continue a member of the Union. To deny this right would be inconsistent with the principle on which all our political systems are founded, which is, that the people have in all cases a right to determine how they will be governed. . . . And the doctrine heretofore presented to the reader in regard to the indefeasible nature of personal allegiance is so far qualified in respect to allegiance to the United States. . . . The States then may wholly withdraw from the Union. . . . The secession of a State from the Union depends on the will of the people of such State."

Now the weight of authority which attaches to a text-book at West Point, owing to its freedom from being called in question, can scarcely be appreciated by students of other colleges; what is laid down in them as principles or advocated as theories sink their roots deeply into a cadet's mind. It is true Rawle was used as a text-book for two years only, from 1825 to 1827, and ordinarily one might safely say that a text-book of no longer use than that in a college would not have a prolonged influence at the institution.

on the point of State sovereignty he was very far in advance of the consolidationists of our time." (See *Southern Historical Society Papers*, vol. xxii, p. 83.)

But this case proved to be an exception to the rule, and with due regard for those who arrive at opposite conclusions, I believe the explanation is found in the life and political career of Jefferson Davis, who graduated in 1828. It will be recalled that on the death of Calhoun, who first marshaled the Southern forces believing in the right of secession, Mr. Davis became his acknowledged successor, and I think may be credited as one of the earliest and most influential of the leaders whose views on this subject became widely dominant on the eve of the breaking-out of the war. At an early stage in his political career Mr. Davis planted himself squarely on Rawle's ground, and it is significant that in his old age, twenty-five years after the mighty struggle was over, in writing to an old friend who, like himself, had risked all and lost in loyalty to his conviction, Mr. Davis goes back to Rawle, to the text-book of his schoolboy days, for the justification of his friend's and his own political views. Therefore to whatsoever measure his cadet mind was first opened to this question of State sovereignty by Rawle, it may be claimed, and I think fairly, that as a text-book at West Point it played an important part in his life and thereby in the history of the country.

And now for the prolongation of Rawle's influence at West Point. From 1852 to 1856

Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War, which brought him into close official relations with the Academy, in which he had never lost his warmest interest. As the head of the War Department he revised its course, he commissioned many of its cadets, visited West Point often, and was the personal friend of its superintendent, General Robert E. Lee, its commandant, William J. Hardee, and of all the professors, several of them having been cadets with him in the corps, and knowing well, and in close personal relations with, many of the officers who were on duty at the Academy. And in this relation of comradeship, let us not forget the purity of his life and his unquestioned integrity, or that he was endowed with a personal charm and at the same time a dignity which few men of his day or any day have possessed. Bearing all this in mind and duly appreciating the growing fever which possessed the South, I think the reasons will be found why the theory of State sovereignty, and its necessary corollary of paramount allegiance to a State, as accepted by Lee and others, should have had vitality at West Point long after it was denounced elsewhere in the North.

One step farther, dear reader, — and throughout this attempt to answer the inquiry broached at the beginning of this chapter I have felt as if I were walking by the side of an open-hearted

youth along a shady country road barred here and there by sunshine, with here and there a blooming clematis pavilioning its thickety side, — however inadequately I have answered the inquiry why West Point men resigned to join the Confederacy, I trust you will not lose sight of the deep and widespread conviction of the South that it was right and that the underlying question was and is an academic one, and that the merits of academic questions as such are not to be decided by a preponderance of physical strength or resources, though the exigencies of a people's necessities or duties to humanity may require them to suppress it as an issue by force of arms. Nor will you lose sight, I trust, of the deep and widespread confusion in the minds of the North on that same subject, nor, at the last, of the overwhelming wave of emotional revolution that swept away every old landmark and buoy of the Union from the minds of the Southern men. So, had it been your fortune to be alive at that stormy period, I believe your wonder would be that any graduate or cadet from the South remained loyal. And yet over half of the Southern graduates living at the breaking-out of the war stood by the Union — a number to lose their lives, many to be wounded and maimed, and about all to be cast off and disowned by blood and kin. Those

loyal Southerners I have always thought were our greatest moral heroes. For what days of mental trial and nights of bitter anguish they went through! Put yourself in their places — all the yearning ties of home, boyhood's friends, sweethearts, the old plantations beckoning from their fields and runs and woods, the firesides, the churchyards whose silent dust had called their boyish tears to flow fast as they stood beside the freshly dug graves — all appealing to them to go with their section, come what might. Young husbands and mothers of to-day, happy among those you love and, happily, too, I hope, unacquainted with trouble, the writer knows what he is telling about of the trials of the loyal Southerners. He sees the tears standing in the eye, and then on their way down the cheeks of one of the sweetest daughters of the far South as in her quarters at Fortress Monroe, in 1862, she told him of her cross. Not a drop of Northern blood in her veins or in those of her knightly Virginian husband, and not a connecting link by marriage with a Northern family. Her only child, a little girl, was playing on the floor and wondered why her mother's face should be so wet. But such pure, smiling courage and gentle loveliness! the foot of a rainbow in a meadow, moonlight on clouds, never were lovelier or purer than the light which glinted those falling tears as

she said, "Oh, nothing, dear Katie," and kissed the child. That woman was the wife of my first commanding officer; and the writer never thinks of her or of him that he does not see Hampton Roads, and hear again the lonely bells of the warships proclaiming the hours of the night, — the famous little Monitor was lying low and dark among them, — and the waves coming in and murmuring along the starlit beach.

Can there be any question that those who fell on the field or died in the hospital or at home had not a heavenly comforter at their side as the earth began to fade away? Or that the spirit of West Point failed to accompany each one up to the very gates, saying with swimming eyes to the Keeper, "I wish you would let him in — he has followed the path of duty to the end, and I feel tenderly for him." "Did you say he followed the path of duty to the end?" asks the Keeper. "Yes, to the very end." And as the gates open and turn on their hinges there breaks forth a triumphant psalm. And behold! he enters the Valley of Vision.

It would be unworthy of the writer, after accompanying any one, even in thought, to the gates of Heaven, to come back to earth harboring the least spirit of faultfinding or reproach for those Southerners who followed their section. No, he found no fault when he parted with

them; he finds no fault now; nor does he wish to discuss the right or wrong of the question that divided us. The war which settled that looms, like an extinct volcano, far away against the skyline of the past. But as I view it through its azure veil, it is covered with green, with magnolia and cypress, with holly and sassafras, with beech, maple, and elm, with laurel and oak, far up to its soaring rim, and over its once fire-belching crater soft clouds are floating, tinged with the hopes and the glory of a common country.

Among those from Virginia who resigned when his State left the Union was my classmate, Dearing, — James Dearing of Lynchburg. The mention of his name will recall to every one who was at West Point with him, and to every old Confederate artilleryman or cavalryman who served with him, his tall figure, his naturally hearty greeting, and his naturally happy face. Moreover, to those who were his close friends — I am sure to every one who was in D Company with him — there will come into their vision groups of fellow cadets in gray and white, now in barracks and now in camp, and in their midst will be Dearing playing on his banjo and singing "Dixie," — the first time I ever heard that song, so consecrated to the Confederacy, it was sung by him. I wonder how

many camp-fires in Virginia he enlivened with that same banjo. Camp-fires that burned so brightly before Gettysburg and so faintly as the deadly end came on. But what went far beyond the crackling-toned instrument to light up the wan face of the Confederacy was his cheerful and naturally buoyant voice. He became a brigadier-general, and was mortally wounded at the battle of High Bridge just a few days before Appomattox. Our fellow classman, Mackenzie, then a major-general and in command of a division of cavalry, learning that Dearing was seriously wounded, went to see him. And one spring day after the war was over, when we were walking through the Common in Boston, talking of bygone days, he told me that Dearing, although near his end, greeted him with all of his old-time cordiality, and inquired affectionately for us all. The gallant, fine-hearted, cheery-voiced fellow lived only a few days, then passed away.

His photograph, which he sent me from New York when on his way home from West Point, is now in an old album. To the living the album will soon mean nothing, but it means and recalls a great deal to me every time my eye falls on the dimming faces of some of my early and dear friends.

Among those who resigned the same day

with Dearing, April 22, was Niemeyer of Virginia, who was killed during Grant's Rapidan and Richmond campaign in 1864; Willett, a very modest and lovable man from Tennessee, who fell, I believe, at Shiloh, and Graves of Kentucky, who lost his life at Chickamauga. There were thirty-three who resigned that same day, and now, as I look over the long list and my eye rests on the names of Twyman and Lovejoy, W. R. Jones and Faison, Clayton and Washington, Logan, Marchbanks, and Kinney, "Bob" Noonan, "Rube" Ross, and Taliaferro, a feeling of sadness comes over me, and I wish I could see them all. Yes, I wish that my class might meet again, and, drawing the benches under the elms into a circle not far from the evening gun, be once more the happy boys we were, — I am sure the old flag on the staff over us would ripple out joyfully, — and should Hardee and Reynolds come along arm in arm, as I know they would, we would all rise and give them a right-hand salute. And should old Bentz, the bugler, reappear off across the Plain, on the walk which he always followed when he blew the calls for chapel, we would motion to him to come over and join us and we would shake the hand of the dear old soldier well.

And now, as so often happened with my Uncle Toby when he described his sieges and

war experiences, the reunion has become a reality and about all of the boys of the class who entered in 1858 are present. Moreno of Florida, with his soft, liquid Castilian eyes, — Senator Mallory, Confederate Secretary of the Navy, married his sister, — has brought along his guitar and is singing once more the sweet little Spanish song, "Luego al instante"; Dearing is about to give us "Dixie"; but who are those coming across the Plain — and who is that at their head, swinging his cap? It is "Jim" Rollins of Missouri! the sun is shining on his golden hair, the dimple is in his cheek, affection is glowing in his handsome face, and on his brow is the same old seal of the gentleman. We throw our arms around him, for he was the darling of us all. And upon my soul! here comes Van Buren, with all of his courtly good manners, the same to one and all, and there is a general cheer for Van. And here come Drake and Riddle and little Wetmore, who, if he had stayed, would have graduated at the head of our class, — in about every way he was the most brilliant youth I ever saw, — and here comes George McKee. I have a little book in which some of the men who resigned wrote their names as they came to bid me good-by; in it is McKee's, whose Kentucky mother stopped his resignation just in time. It is written on the blade of

a savage-looking bowie-knife, with "Good-by, Morris, God bless you!" over it. Mac takes his place as of old in the very centre of the class, his distinguished, handsome face and black eyes lit up with all the old-time fervor as he greets us all. And here come Joe Blount and Lovejoy and little Jim Hamilton and Clayton and Semmes, and we are all hands round the dear Southerners. And who is that drawing near with that natural sweet smile? some one cries out, perhaps it is Gillespie or Burroughs. "Why, boys, that's Jasper Myers; make way for dear old Jasper!" and there is n't a hand that has n't a heart in it as all the Class of 1858 welcome him again. "Hats off, men!" commands Mackenzie, the ablest, the manliest, the most distinguished among us all, "here comes Sep Sanderson." Sanderson fell between his guns at Pleasant Hill; and with tears in our eyes we hug the dear fellow who is blushing like a girl with modesty. And now West, who is sitting between McCrea and myself on the same bench, turns to me and asks, "Morris, where is Murray?" And I lean over and say, in low tones, "John, don't you know that he was captured the day Hood made his attack on Sherman's left at Atlanta, the day McPherson was killed? He died in one of your Southern prisons — and, John, they say he died hungry." Where-

upon my impulsive old roommate rises, and with his high tenor voice calls the class to attention: "Men, we are all here but little Murray, and Morris tells me that he died in one of our Southern prisons. I offer this hope for the sake of the name of Southerners, that in all future wars in which our countrymen are involved, there will be no Andersonvilles or Salisburys." But before he can go a word further, Sanderson exclaims, "Let me add, for the sake of the name of Northerner, West, that there will never be another Elmira with its horrible mortality"; and, "No more Camp Mortons," shout Beebe and Fred James. The writer, who with a pensive heart leaned more than once on the fence that enclosed the Confederate burial-ground at Rock Island, the little head-boards in weather-worn ranks rising pleadingly out of the matted grass, — there are two thousand of them who hear no trumpets now, — the writer said, "And may there be no more Rock Islands, John." "Allow me to finish, men," exclaims the Georgian. "Let us, the Class of 1858, assembled at West Point, under the flagstaff, and in the presence of all that is sacred to the Christian and to the honor of the soldier and the gentleman, let us beg our countrymen who are to follow us to see to it that all who fall into their hands, no matter who the enemy may be, black or white,

civilized or uncivilized, shall be treated with mercy; and that no prisoner of war shall ever die for want of food, or clothing, or kindness. War is horrible enough at best, let us appeal to the higher nature of mankind for its redemption so far as it may be from barbarity and from a cold indifference to the unfortunate. I think I can pledge to such a prayer every one who followed the Confederate flag with me." And every Southerner present responds, "We stand by you, West, on that sentiment." And hardly have they uttered their hearty assent, when, behold! out of a cloud comes Murray himself, escorted by angels who for a moment sing, "Peace on earth, good will toward men," around us ere they rise. And who is this standing just outside the circle, with a band of heavenly light across her brow? Behold! it is the spirit of the little chapel. "Young gentlemen, I heard your voices and I thought I'd join you all once more." And off go our caps as to a sweetheart, and she is escorted to the very midst. And no sooner had she joined us than the spirit of every battery, monument, Revolutionary fort, spot, and relic which had appealed to our pride in our country, the spirit of the Highlands, of the hills, and every far-spreading landscape that had appealed to our sense of beauty, suggesting that background of mysterious union of earth and sky

GYMNASIUM, LOOKING SOUTHWEST

for manly deeds, contemplative thought, and soldierly lives, all gathered around to welcome us back, those in the name of Courage and Peace, these, with habitual, sweetly remote charm, in behalf of the realm of ideals.

And so, amid resurrected joys of youth, the Class reunion went on, on till the evening shadow of Crow Nest was lengthening over the Plain. Then some one said, "Men, let us march and cheer the old buildings." Bentz, hearing the word "March!" instinctively took the attitude of a soldier, lifted his bugle to his lips, and then, facing toward the quarters of the Academy band, sounded the first call for parade. The full band appeared, we all fell in in two ranks, then formed in two platoons, Dearing in command of the second, McCrea in command of the first, Mackenzie in command of all; and then, with the band at the head, we made the tour of the old West Point, cheering every battery and building, cheering the homes of all our old professors, and three times three cheers for Thayer, our Alma Mater's founder, as we passed him on the way to Barracks.

But long before we reached his monument our column of platoons had grown in length. Every one who had been a cadet from South and North in the battalion from 1858 to 1862 had joined us, as well as officers who had been

our instructors: Webb and Alexander, Howard and Slemmer, Saxton, Fitz Lee, and Hartsuff, Reynolds and Hardee; they were all in the column and cheered the West Point of their boyhood.

When we reached the little chapel the band, in softly tender tones, played "Auld Lang Syne," and then the closing strains of a Te Deum. The spirit of the little chapel rose, and with uplifted eyes and outstretched arms invoked a blessing on us all. As her beneficent hands were sinking to her side, the sound of a pick digging the foundation of the new West Point fell; and lo, to its blunt, inexorable summons, the mystic assemblage of cadets and officers from 1858 to 1862 quickly vanished!

XX

THE PEACEMAKERS

The week during which so many of the Southern men left was full of intense interest. Perhaps in all of West Point's life there has never been its equal, or one even like it. For the hearts of the people from one end of the country to the other were heaving from their depths, depths of feeling which are reached only when mankind is on the verge of some great trial and about to fight its way to some azure crest in the range of ideals; one of those times when the shrines of our better natures are all flashing, and mysterious hands are sweeping those harps which are hung in the sky of our being; oh, yes, when Poetry and Art, and their heavenly sister, Religion, are all active in behalf of our sentiment and imagination, that their great creative instincts may make new advances toward the light of God.

I wish I could translate that week's record of our country's deep feeling into terms that would satisfy the ultimate sources of reason, history, and divine interpretation; for I have a consciousness that in it lie those movements which at last are transmuted into epics and lyrics, and those exalted terms which we find on the lips of the great seers and prophets.

Whatever the week's record may embrace of the inspiration I have intimated, it marked the display of what is known as West Point friendship. And in due time for that friendship I shall claim our present peace and national welfare and, what is more, the salvation of our land from horrible pages of history; but for the present let the following letter, written by my classmate McCrea on Saturday, the 27th of April, 1861, throw its light on what had happened at West Point in the week then closing: —

"On Sunday night, or rather Monday morning, for it was after 12 o'clock, some of the cadets serenaded Lieutenant McCook. On Tuesday night we serenaded Captain Seymour, one of the heroes of Fort Sumter, who was here visiting his father-in-law, Professor Weir. It was a clear moonlight night, and there were about fifty cadets in front of the house. Captain Seymour came to the window and made us a patriotic speech. We could see his features well and he looked as if he had had a hard time at Fort Sumter. When he made his appearance at the window the cadets applauded everything that he said, from beginning to end. But he would have been applauded if he had not said a word, for actions speak louder than words, and his actions at Fort Sumter had preceded

him and endeared him to every true American heart.

"On Friday the officers serenaded Lieutenant Lee (Fitz Hugh), who is a Virginian and has resigned because his State has seceded. He was the most popular officer that I have ever seen at West Point. He was liked by the officers, cadets, ladies, and in fact by every one that knew him. It was a bitter day for him when he left, for he did not want to go, and said that he hated to desert his old flag. But he thought that it was his duty to do as Virginia did. He was the commandant of my company, and on Friday evening he came to bid us good-by. He went to every room and shook hands with every one of us with tears in his eyes, and hoped, he said, that our recollections of him would be as happy as those he had of us. When he shook hands with me I expressed my regrets that he was going away. He said that he was sorry to leave, but as he belonged to the other side of the line, it was time that he was going. On Saturday morning after breakfast the cadets gathered in front of the barracks to see him off. As he passed in the omnibus we took off our hats and waved them. This may appear very natural and matter-of-fact to you, for you do not know enough about military usage to recognize the great difference that there is between an officer

and a subaltern. I believe it is the second time that I ever shook hands with an officer, although it is three years that I have been here.

"Sunday evening. To-day directly after dinner a large boat passed down the river loaded with volunteers from the northern part of the State. I never saw such a crowd before on a single boat, for it appeared like a hive of bees, as all the volunteers crowded to the guards to exchange salutes and cheers with the cadets. The boat was so heavily laden that it moved very slowly through the water, consequently remained within saluting distance for some time. The Graycoats on the shore would give three cheers and wave their caps and handkerchiefs; then the Bluecoats on the boat would return the cheers, wave their handkerchiefs, the captain of the boat would blow his steam whistle, ring his bell, and every one showed his patriotism and excitement in every possible way. This was kept up between the cadets on the shore and the volunteers on the boat until it had passed out of sight. It was an exciting scene, and it gladdened every patriotic heart to see so many noble volunteers on their way to defend the nation's capital. Even the officers forgot their dignity and waved their caps and handkerchiefs. And the strict old Commandant even went so far as to permit us to go off of limits

in order to see and be seen better. The 'sick' in the hospital crawled out of their wards on to the porch and saluted them as they passed. The ladies smiled upon them and also waved their handkerchiefs and all wished them success in their holy mission. These are not the first troops that have come from the North, but all heretofore have come down on the railroad, which is on the other side of the river, thus preventing us from seeing them."

There was an incident in connection with Lee, not mentioned in this letter, which is worth preserving. Some of the cadets of his Company "A," hailing from the North, decorated their rooms by pinning little flags on their alcove curtains. This display of patriotism flamed out too rapidly for him in his troubled state of mind, and he ordered them removed, on the ground that it was a violation of the regulations. McCrea, in obedience to the order, took his down, collected the paints and brushes which he used in the department of drawing, and then proceeded with firmly set jaws to paint his water bucket with bands of red, white, and blue. Now this utensil was a part of the authorized furniture of the rooms, and the regulations did not prescribe how it should be painted. What Fitz thought of this flank movement is not recorded; and, so far as the writer knows, this was the only

really historic picture that Tully ever executed; and yet he helped to make a celebrated one, namely, that which was painted on the country's memory by Pickett's charge, with McCrea and others facing it undaunted between thundering guns.

The serenade by the officers to Fitz Hugh Lee I remember very well: Guilford D. Bailey, who was killed on the Peninsula, and several others, occupied the tower rooms with him. I had often heard them laughing and sometimes singing at late hours in his quarters while I roomed in the Angle. To many readers who have inherited or imbibed from one source or another more or less of the passions of the war, it may seem strange that loyal officers, and above all officers on duty at West Point, should serenade a Southerner like Lee on the eve of his taking up arms against the government.

I can readily understand the present generation's surprise at an event of this kind; and go farther to say that had such a manifestation been made elsewhere in the North, so violent was the feeling at that time, a riot would certainly have followed. Yet with total unconsciousness of any incongruity the same kindly feeling and equally sad partings took place between officers at every post. But it was soon followed by an evil result, for it was not long

before a distrust of the loyalty of all West Point men was diffused throughout the North. And by the end of the second year of the war it had risen so high that a movement to put civilians at the head of the army was openly discussed by influential Northerners.

It is not necessary to resurrect these long-since buried charges, so unjust and so disheartening in their day. But it is due to West Point to exonerate her from the insinuation that her friendships ever stayed the delivering of attack, or that one of her sons ever failed to give the most loyal support and obedience to his civilian commander. And the records of the war prove it, for one in every five of those engaged laid down his life, one in every three, and probably every other one, was wounded. No, no, it made no difference who was in command. On the other hand, West Point has a right to claim something due as to West Point friendships: I refer to the part they played at Appomattox, and my heart leaps with pride, for on that day two West Point men met, with more at stake than has ever fallen to the lot of two Americans to decide. On the manner in which they should meet, on the temper with which they should approach the mighty issue, depended the future peace of the country and the standards of honor and glory for the days to come. There was the

choice between magnanimity to a gallant foe and a spirit of revenge; there was the choice between official murders for treason, and leaving the page of our country's history aglow with mercy; there was the choice between the conduct of a conqueror, and the conduct of a soldier and a gentleman; finally, there was the choice for these two men, who for over a year had fronted each other on so many fields, to garland the occasion by the display of what is greater than victory, — terms that the Christian and the lover of peace in all ages of the world will honor. These two West Point men knew the ideals of their old Alma Mater, they knew each other as only graduates of that institution know each other, and they met on the plane of that common knowledge. I cannot avoid expressing the belief that the greatest hour that has ever come in the march of our country's years was on that April day, when Grant and Lee shaped the terms at Appomattox. And then what happened? The graduates of both armies met as brothers and planted then and there the tree that has grown, blooming for the Confederate and blooming for the Federal, and under whose shade we now gather in peace. West Point has rendered many a service: she opened the gates to Grant's undreamed-of abilities; with beating heart she was with Thomas as he stood at Chick-

amauga that mighty September day; she was at Warren's side on Round Top; she was with little George B. McClellan when he rallied the Army of the Potomac after Second Bull Run; all these were great services. But her greatest service was in inspiring and revealing the ideals of the soldier and the gentleman, and in knitting friendships which, when called on by the world's love of gentleness, responded at Appomattox by bringing back enduring peace, leaving our country's history unshadowed by revenge and unhaunted by the victims of political gibbets.

Lee's attitude has never, it seems to me, had due recognition. Had he yielded to a sense of mortification over defeat, had he been ill-natured and revengeful, one word from him and the conflict would have degenerated into bloody and barbarous guerrilla warfare. On the contrary, by his dignified, yet full and manly meeting of Grant on his high level of magnanimity and statesmanship, he rendered a great service to his country and generation.

On that occasion he was dressed like and looked the gentleman. Grant, in simple garb stained with the campaign, bore himself and acted the gentleman; both honored their Alma Mater and both honored their country; and both little dreamed that they were marching

abreast up the broad stairway of the Temple of Fame, not to take their places among the world's conquerors, but among the heralds of civilization and all the mild, brave, and blessed benefactors of the world. For their example is bound, it seems to me, to be influential hereafter when the heads of armies and governments meet to settle upon the terms of peace.

While I have written these last few paragraphs the overarching West Point has seemed near; at times so near and so definite that I thought — perhaps it was a mere, but not, I trust, vainglorious illusion — I could almost read the thought in the faces of the spiritual embodiments of truth and honor and courage and duty. To this statement of possible community with creatures of the imagination, science and reason will give neither weight nor credence, treating it as sheer fantasy. Perhaps they are right in discouraging all converse with ethereal messengers; but science and reason should not overlook the fact that language itself, through its primitive associations, has intercourse with the very elements of the matter on whose properties they base their cold and verdureless eminence, deaf to and unconscious of the communion that is ever going on around them. But who knows how soon the day will come when imagination's now shadowy world will be

CAVALRY SQUADRON DRILL

real, when mankind will see truth and virtue and honor as we see and know the heavenly bodies glowing steadfastly so far away in the depths of space.

As this is in all probability the last time the writer will refer to the overarching West Point, for one of his little crew that has labored so faithfully and willingly throughout the course of this narrative reports that around another headland lies a vast and silent deep, — it is the end, — the writer begs to say, as he parts with the idea, that to it his narrative owes whatsoever color and atmosphere it may have. And if through its inspiration he has left a clearer and, he hopes, a kinder image of his Alma Mater, — that it is not a school of blood or of pomp or of the mere science of the Art of War; if through it he has given to any young man one single uplifting thought, he parts with gratitude from what has been to him a source of intellectual pleasure.

Owing to the great demand for regular officers to help drill and organize the three months' volunteers that were rushed by the States into Washington in reply to Lincoln's proclamation, orders came to graduate Dupont's, Upton's, and Babcock's class.

The personnel of the military staff changed rapidly: McCook left for the field, followed by

Warren, Vincent, Holabird, Benton, Hascall, Comstock, Symonds, and Du Barry; and in the summer and early autumn went Reynolds, Williams, Breck, Biggs, and Carroll — and all rendered valuable services. Comstock, to whom I remember to have recited on one or two occasions, — he and Mendell were our instructors in mechanics, — became a member of Grant's staff in the Vicksburg campaign and accompanied him to the Army of the Potomac. Like his great commander, he was a modest, quiet, unpretentious man, and one to whose judgment Grant gave more heed, I believe, than to that of any other of the younger officers on his staff. I messed with Warren at Meade's headquarters and served with him temporarily in the early days of the Rapidan campaign. Carroll I saw frequently in the field. In the Wilderness and at Spottsylvania his services were brilliant. I have sometimes thought he saved the day at the Wilderness as he saved it at Gettysburg.

"The time had come," says Walker in his history of the Second Corps, referring to the second day of the battle of the Wilderness, "for him to do the same feat of arms which he had performed on the night of the 2d of July at Gettysburg. Putting his brigade into motion [it was composed of the 4th and 8th Ohio and 14th Indiana], himself with bandaged arm, at

the head of the column, Carroll dashed on the run across the road, and then coming to a 'front,' charged forward, encountering the exultant Confederates in the very moment of their triumph, and hurling them head foremost over the intrenchments."

On April 13, 1861, by order of the Secretary of War, the Superintendent was directed to call upon the professors, officers, and cadets to take an oath of allegiance prescribed by the War Department. In compliance with the above order the Academic Board, officers, and cadets, assembled in the chapel at 5 P. M. on Monday, May 13, 1861, and took the oath before William Avery, justice of the peace. I have always thought that this order was inspired by the conduct of the Southern men in Dupont's class, who resigned at once after graduating. However that may be, in August the War Department concluded that we had better take the oath again, but this time they introduced into the form, "That I will maintain and defend the sovereignty of the United States, paramount to any and all allegiance, sovereignty, or fealty I may owe to any State, county, or country whatsoever." When the time came, two men from Kentucky declined to take it and were dismissed. One was Dunlap, whose rough-and-tumble fight with Kilpatrick in the Fifth Divi-

sion has already been told; the other was a member of the Fourth Class. After returning home the latter entered the Union Army and was killed in battle. I have often thought of that boy; and his pale face on that memorable day, the target of every eye in the battalion, still comes and goes. I believe that of all the men of our day Fate handed him her deepest cup: the struggle at West Point, the burning punishment of that hour in the chapel, the weight of twilight that night, his lonely and heavy-hearted departure, his last despairing look at the place. His reason for declining was, I suspect, his boyish love of and pride in Kentucky. But when he reached home he found his State a divided household; who knows why he took a step at home so inconsistent with that at West Point? Did his sweetheart love the Union, and did he follow the flag for her sake? Was her look kindlier than that of any other in the world? and for that show of charity, did he go to the side of her choice, and yield up his life?

The writer does not know on what field he fell, but hopes that it slopes to the morning sun, that some little brook winds murmuring across it, and that here and there over it are primeval trees like those which dignify and bless his Blue Grass country, where the night winds breathe a requiem for the ill-fated but dear boy through

their tops. The chances are that he was only nineteen or twenty years old.

Our first shock of the war was the death of Lieutenant Greble, which occurred on June 10, 1861, in the battle of Big Bethel, Virginia; and I remember to this day the impression it made upon me, for he and Webb were the very first of my instructors. The papers gave every detail of his death and of his burial from Independence Hall in Philadelphia. A few days ago, to refresh my memory, I read the account of his funeral. He lay in state on a bier that had borne the bodies of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, and for three hours the young and old of the people of Philadelphia filed by his remains; in the long procession were the children of the public schools that he had attended. His sword lay on the colors, and near by his hat, with a long black plume, and there were wreaths of mingled jessamine, heliotrope, and mignonette, with white roses, on his coffin. Two long white ribbons hung gracefully from it, on which was printed the single word "Purity." No word in the language was more fitting, and no word, I believe, does the spirit of West Point like better.

The writer has given this detail of his instructor's funeral for several reasons: because he was drawn toward him by his gentleness at a time when everybody at West Point seemed

so cold and hard; and that the present generation may have some idea of the depth of feeling and of what the war meant to the living; but above all, that it may open the gates of reflection, and that through them the generation may behold two or three splendors in the distance, — gentleness, courage, and a country ready to greet death for a principle.

Shortly after the battle where Greble lost his life, orders came to graduate Mordecai's, Hill's, "Shang" Parker's, and Edie's class. On June 24 they were graduated without the usual impressive ceremonies, and all left for the field, save Custer, who, being officer of the guard, instead of stopping a fight going on between two plebes over whose turn it was at the water-faucet, rushed in with sword and sash, formed a ring, and then and there proclaimed that it was to be a fair fight. Meanwhile the officer in charge appeared, and Custer was put under arrest and charges filed against him. Fortunately for the country, they were not pressed, and he got away just in time to reach the field before the battle of Bull Run.

The graduation of his class advanced mine to first rank in the corps, a dignity already commented upon, and to which the writer never looks back without a consciousness of some evocation from the uplifting influences of the Academy.

The next event of importance in chronological order was the famous battle of Bull Run, the first of the great battles in Virginia. The news of the disaster reached us late in the afternoon, and strangely enough my first informant was Professor Church. The early dispatches from the field had all been favorable, arousing great enthusiasm, and we were expecting to hear at any moment that McDowell had won. The news, growing more and more exciting as the afternoon wore along, had slowly filtered down to the hospital, where I had been for a day or two with some trifling ailment; and, to get the latest, I went up to camp. It was on my return that I met the professor. He was talking earnestly with two army officers at the junction of the path which runs under the elms before the barracks with the driveway to the hotel; in other words, diagonally across from the little chapel. As I saluted he turned to me with blanched face and said, "Mr. Schaff, the news has just been received that our army has met with defeat and is fleeing to Washington in utter rout." As soon as I could recover from my surprise, I asked if any one of our officers had been killed, having in mind those of the West Point Battery and those who had lately left us as officers and cadets. He answered, "I hope not, but the dispatch gives no details." I did not presume to inquire

further, saluted again, and went on my way. And from that day to this it has been impossible for me to decide which was the more astounding, the news of the army's defeat or the source of its conveyance. For, two long years I had day after day in the section room scanned the broad face of that little, deeply-brown-eyed old professor, striving in vain to read the riddle of his being and never discovering a single indication that he shared the power to feel with his fellow mortals, — although those who knew him well told me in after years that he was the tenderest of men; — and now, to have him, totally unconscious of self and the gulf that lay between us as professor and cadet, address me with so much feeling and share news of such mighty import, opened more than one shutter of the windows of my mind. There are little plots in fields, there are lilies in the woods, and there are islands in the sea, which suddenly please and surprise, but a turn of a character on its orbit, showing beams of light over a cold and inscrutably dark waste, carries a peculiar pleasure to the inward eye, one that in its mystery is far and away above the lights and shades of the natural world.

On my arrival at the hospital I told the news, and can see now the surprised and dumbfounded look of every one, and especially of the hospital

steward, a middle-aged German with a nervous, keen face and rodential air of having caught a whiff of something like cheese. He was an old soldier and a competent hospital steward, but we most heartily detested him, not because he failed to do his duty, but because he did it too well. Boylike, we often tried his patience, and as often resented his exercise of authority; but he always got even with us. For whenever the surgeon would prescribe a disagreeable dose, he seemed to take special pleasure in seeing to it that we swallowed every bit of it; and when he had to use a probang, found infinite delight in getting a good grip on our tongues with a bent, spoon-like, clammy iron instrument, and then ramming his sponge up and down our throats till we were black in the face. Well, steward, we were the offenders, and if at the final day you need a friend, call on any one of the Class of 1858–62 and I will guarantee that he will say a good word for you to the Judge of all. There will be no question of rank between us then, steward, and, I sincerely hope, no probangs about.

The blow to the North was a staggering one, and its effects at this time can hardly be realized. But it was the best turn in the wheel of fortune for the North. It eliminated vainglory, pulled off the mask from all those deceptive allurements

of war, and drew the curtain displaying the glories which shine at last in the faces of generations which yield to and follow the high moods. We did not see its providential ordering, but we do now see that had we gained a great victory at the outset, or at any time before slavery had exhausted every element of strength of the people on which it had fastened, enduring peace could not have been established between North and South.

Shortly after supper the writer slipped out of the hospital and started for camp again. As he passed the little chapel he heard his class singing, — clearer and clearer their voices reached him as in the twilight he traversed the Plain, — and with quickening step he crossed the sentinel's post to join them at the head of one of the company streets. In the face of the defeat they were singing patriotic airs with fine spirit.

Before tattoo sounded I made my way back to the hospital and sat long on the porch, having for a companion a gentleman from Baltimore who, while practicing with a pistol in the riding-hall, had wounded himself slightly. He was a brother-in-law of Lieutenant Carroll, later General Carroll, and, if my memory serves me right, had been appointed, but not yet commissioned, as an officer of the army. What he said —and he was a most voluminous and nimble

Munchausen talker — I do not remember. But I do remember a full moon mounting serenely, diffusing a flood of chaste light over the Highlands and down into the face of the tranquil Hudson, which, as viewed from the hospital, bears on in sunlight and moonlight so beautifully great.

The circumstance that two young men sat on the bank of the Hudson on the night of the battle of Bull Run, that a moon bedecked the heavens, shedding her blessed light down through leafy tree-tops, and over fields and spires, and upon flocks asleep, contributes nothing to the reader's store of knowledge as to West Point or its spirit, or as to the drama whose stage at Bull Run was dotted at that hour with pale, fallen actors. And yet had some Briton sitting on the banks of the Thames on the evening of the battle of Hastings, or had some Moor sitting on the banks of the Darro the night before the Alhambra fell, told us how the night looked, whether there were moon and stars, it would have brought the scene a little closer and added perhaps that little Æolian chord to history which always sounds so enchantingly distant when nature and our simple emotions are translating themselves into one another's terms.

The authorities at Washington, wrought to

the highest pitch by the defeat of the crude army, ordered our class to be graduated at the very earliest date. We hailed the news with boundless delight, and at once took up our studies in field engineering and ordnance. In the former we recited to Lieutenant Craighill of the Engineers, later the chief of his distinguished corps; now, retired as a brigadier general, he is passing the evening of a long and useful life in the Valley of the Shenandoah. May blessings fall on our old instructor to the end!

Well, we started off in high glee. In a few days — I believe the Superintendent thought he could get us ready in three weeks — we should be officers of the army and at the front, realizing what it was to go into battle and see our lives take on all the hues of that radiantly illusive phantasmagoria set in motion by what we had read or heard of war. What fortune! For suppose the war should end suddenly and we have no part in it, would we ever get through bemoaning our luck? But now we were *sure* to see some of it. Imagine our collapse, then, when one day, while we were reciting in ordnance and gunnery to Lieutenant Breck, the adjutant came in and whispered something in his ear. Whereupon Lieutenant Breck, with a sardonic smile, said, "Young gentlemen, you may suspend recitations," addressing those at

the blackboard; "the order for the graduation of your class has been revoked." Had we been photographed at that moment, there certainly would have been anything but angelic dreaminess in our countenances.

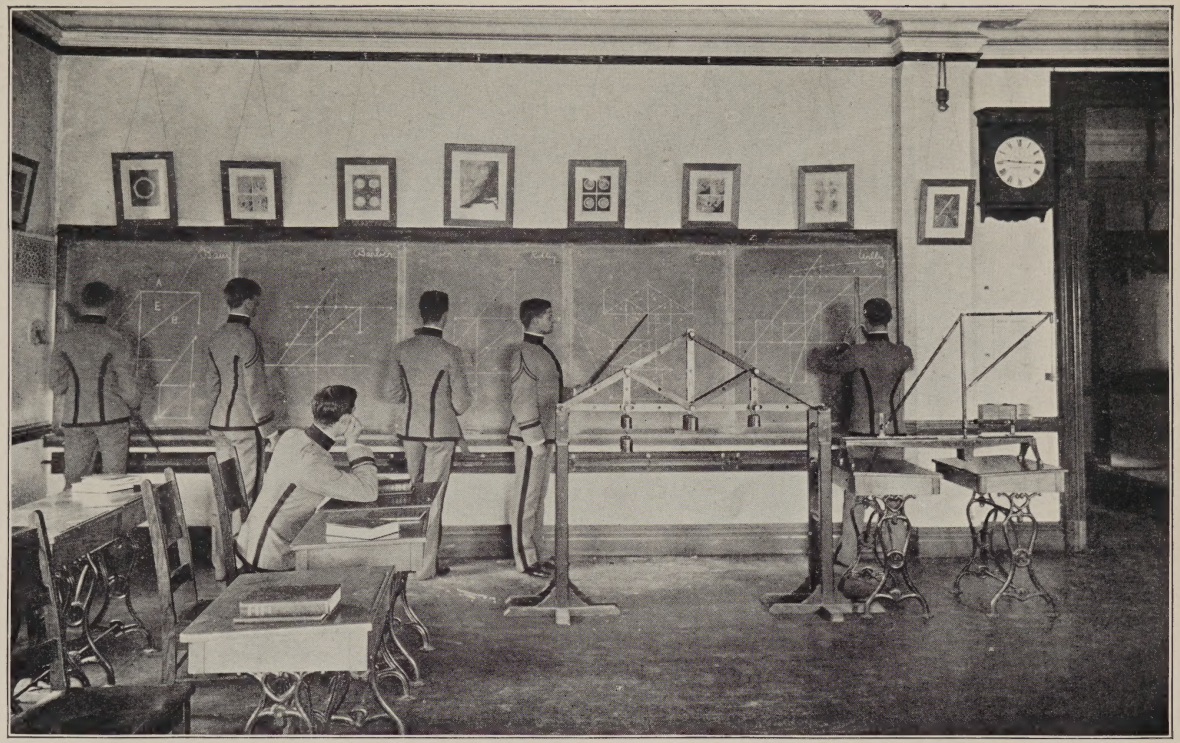
I do not recall ever having heard the class quite so voluble as when we broke ranks and could speak out. Matthew Arnold says that Gray never spoke out; he could not have said that of the Class of '62 on this occasion; and if any of the readers of these articles who have gained an impression that butter would hardly have melted in the mouths of these young gentlemen — they were so refined and good — could have heard a few of the remarks that were made that day, there would have been no place left in their minds, at least temporarily, for illusions. We went back to camp disgusted through and through, and some of the more despondent said hopelessly, "The war will be over before we get out of the —— place." But it was not over; no, we had all we wanted of war.

About this time Mackenzie, the leader of our class, of whom Grant speaks so enviably, was "broken," and the writer was appointed a lieutenant in his place, and carried a sword proudly behind C Company until that unfortunate trip across the Hudson already described.

It is not my purpose or inclination to dwell

at length on that last year at West Point. In some ways I enjoyed it deeply, and the fountains of those joys are still flowing. But before referring to them let me reflect, vaguely to be sure, some features of our West Point life which I think then prevailed in great measure at every college, at Princeton, Yale, Harvard, in fact wherever a college bell rang: namely, the utter neglect of study, and indifference to class standing. The war absorbed everybody; it began to be talked of at sunrise, it was still the topic at sunset, and among college men it was talked of long after night fell and laborers were asleep. They gathered in their rooms and talked; they sat on the fence under the elms at New Haven and talked; they sat on the steps of the historic dormitories of Harvard; and the Tigers were on those of old Nassau long, long after the lights in the professors' quarters were out; and I have no doubt that more than once the lock pealed midnight and the college boys — God bless every one of them of every college in the land to-day! — were still talking of the war.

And so it was with our class at West Point. It is true that discipline was not relaxed, nor was there any abatement in the requirements of the academic departments; but, save now and then a natural student, the class as a whole were



SECTION-ROOM RECITATION IN MECHANICS

more like bees getting ready to swarm; the workers had all left the fields and were buzzing about the new queen, — that is, the war. Our hearts were not in our books, they were off beyond the Potomac. There is a blank book now lying beside me which I used for a notebook in the course of military engineering, and it bears abundant evidence on every page of the war's domination, and also of my indifference to my studies and waste of opportunity. Instead of notes on how to build temporary bridges, and make reconnaissances, on field work, or on marshaling mixed commands, or scores of subjects on which Lieutenant Craighill gave us valuable and practical instruction, it is filled with caricatures of my classmates while reciting, attempts at humor, and bungling and poorly drawn cartoons.

It may interest the present First Class at West Point, however, to see my estimates of cost of outfit, — they appear several times and vary somewhat, but the following is a fair sample: —

Class ring	$25.00
Class album	46.00
Flannels	17.50
Uniform coat	43.00
Trousers	10.00
Sword and belt	15.00
Pistols	24.00
Traveling-bag	7.50
Underclothing	23.37½
Boots and spurs	9.00
	$220.37½

But I must have been doing some pretty good reading at this time, for written in lead pencil I find these two extracts in the notebook: "Arguments are the sole current coin of intellect. The degree of influence to which an opinion is entitled should be proportional to the weight and value of the reasons."[1] On the same page is a badly drawn cadet making a recitation. Then follow a couple of pages filled with more trifling and wretchedly drawn pictures, and now appears the following: "Preface. There is a stirring and a far heard music sent forth from the tree of knowledge when its branches are fighting with the storm, which, passing onward, shrills out at once truths, triumphs, and its own defeat."[2]

"'The original stock or wild olive tree of our natural powers was not given us to be burned or blighted but to be grafted on.' Coleridge, Essay 12, gives extracts from what he considers as the most eloquent in our English literature."

These are the only indications in the book of any seriousness on my part, and I feel grateful to it for preserving their favorable testimony. Meanwhile the thin old book — its binding a strip of faded brown, its covers a marbled green — has been all these years in that melancholy company which gathers in attics and garrets — with

[1] See *Pliny's Letters*, vol. 2, p. 286.

[2] Coleridge, Essay 11.

children's schoolbooks, their little toy houses, chairs, skates, hobbyhorses, and sleds, old trunks and chests, pictures, curtain-poles, wrinkled cast-off and caved-in traveling-bags, and sturdy old andirons. And now, after this little furlough out into the light and song of to-day, — the apple trees are just blooming, — it must go back to its dreary and fading company; and I think the more chattering ones of the garret — some of that bric-à-brac, for instance, which once paraded so complacently on the mantels and book-cases — will ask as my footsteps die away on the stairway, holding me more or less responsible for their banishment, "Has he any more sense than he used to have, or has he learned *anything* in all these years?" "No," replies the book, settling down into its old place, "he does not seem to be much wiser now than he was then; but I thought I discovered here and there little fields in his heart that were still green; and blooming like roses on a trellis was his boyhood's love for old West Point and the cadet friends of his youth."

There is little more to be told of my West Point life. While I have been writing this narrative about it — and let me confess that the pen at times has run with deep feeling, and many a time, too, in faint hope, yes, almost in despair, of doing justice to the dear old Alma Mater,

to the men and times, and, above all, to that display of high and glorious manhood which met the country's crisis — I say, while I have been writing of its life, and trying as faithfully as I could to build fair images of West Point in the minds of my readers, scores of workmen have been tearing down the old buildings or laying the foundations for those of a new West Point. In a few years the West Point of these articles will be no more; and if the men of my day should go back, so great will have been the changes, I fear they will feel more like strangers than graduates; and, like sons wandering about an old home, their hearts will be heavy. And because it is changed, should they go away mourning for the past, for the West Point of their day? To change is the law of the universe going on with music and triumphal processions which in due time all that is mortal shall hear and see. West Point is under its sway, as well as the humblest and loneliest hamlet. To white-haired veterans, men of Gettysburg, Vicksburg, the Wilderness, and Appomattox, and every graduate up to 1870, the West Point of our day was at the end of an era in her life — an era that began in 1820 with the Missouri Compromise, flowered in 1861 and 1865, and ended when the old board of professors had reached the end of their creatively intellectual, honorable, and in-

spiring lives. From that time on the new West Point began. And is there any reason to believe that in the days to come the graduates of the new West Point will not, if called upon, match the services of those of the old West Point? None whatever. The officers who are there now must be hearing the same trumpet voices out of the sky over them that spoke to the hearts of the men of the old days.

But there are certain changes going on that are much more significant than the replacement of old by new buildings — changes that are fundamental and are the obvious as well as inherent characteristics of what is known as militarism. I refer to the progressive subordination of the Academic Board to the military staff of the Academy. In our day the former were predominant, and rightly so. Mahan, the head of the Department of Civil and Military Engineering, had graduated at the head of his class and then distinguished himself and honored his country by taking a like position at the Polytechnic School in France. Upon his appointment as professor he laid the foundations of the present course in civil and military engineering and the Art of War, by a series of text-books which at once became authority on these subjects. Bartlett by like original works in mechanics, Church in mathematics, and French in the English

course, established themselves and West Point abreast of the times. Kendrick was carrying on Bailey's pioneer work in geology and mineralogy; Robert Weir, the professor of drawing, had risen into the company of the great artists of his day by his celebrated pictures in the rotunda at Washington. Now, add to these intellectual acquirements that one great subtle quality called character, I mean that element of stimulating power which emanates with pervading and constant force from men of ability, of achievement, of courtly good manners, and, above all, of high moral standards, and it is easy to see what a tone they would give and what reverence they would receive. And in our day that reverence was not confined to the cadets alone, it characterized the bearing of every officer on duty at the Academy. And as a result the atmosphere of cultivation and scholarship prevailed over, uplifted, and refined that of barracks and camps.

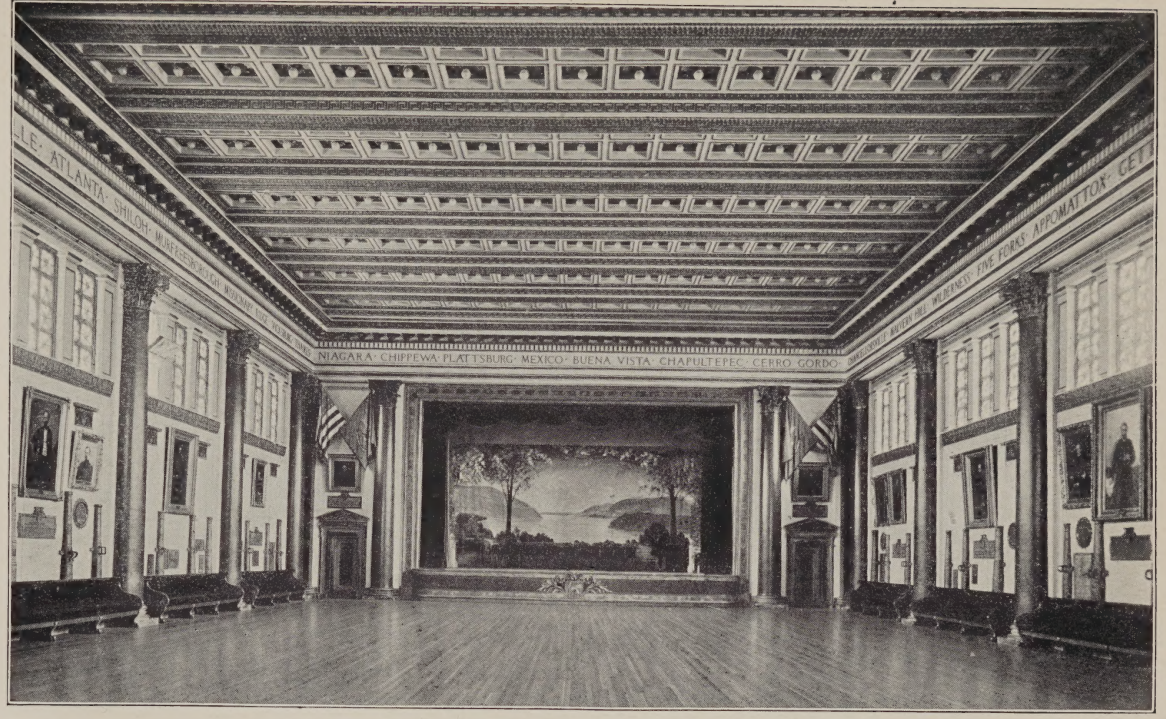
It is far from my intention to say that a complete change has taken place, that the Academic Board has changed places with the Military Staff in the active and formative influences of West Point life. But I cannot resist the conclusion that, if militarism grows more ascendant, serious changes must take place in the ideals of West Point; for ideals feed on culture, they lie

down in the green pastures of knowledge, their shrines are not in drums but in the aspirations of the heart. Militarism once fully entrenched tolerates no challenge of precedence and culture; scholarship, idealism, those great liberating forces, must grow less and less influential as less and less they are appreciated and reverenced. Nothing, it seems to me, could be worse for West Point or worse for the army as a profession than to have the Academic Board sink to the level of mere teachers; in other words, to see West Point fall from the level of a university to that of a post school at a garrison — fall back to the condition in which Major Sylvanus Thayer, the Father of West Point, before whose monument, now facing the Plain, no graduate should pass without lifting his hat, found it when he took command in 1817; that is, detached from the elevating influences of civil life, in other words, encrusted with the impervious lacquer of garrison life. When he left it, as we all know, every feature of West Point life, and especially its martial features, were softly illuminated by the inherent glow of scholarship: not mere technical scholarship, not the patchy stenciling of pedagogy, but that deeply reflecting scholarship which comes from a mingling of science and literature with idealism.

In giving expression to these reflections I

trust that no officer on duty at the Academy or any graduate of late years will think that I am claiming any vanished ideal perfections, or that, as they look back, the new West Point will not be as dear to them, and they be as justly proud of it as I am of the old West Point. The change which I have indicated, the subordination of the Academic Board, is so fraught with danger that I could not refrain from sounding a note of warning. But on the other hand the Academic Board cannot, any more than the faculty of a University, stand still; blossom year by year but produce no fruit. What a cadet expects — and he and the country have a right to expect it — is that the professors shall have recognition at large for learning, not in the narrow but in the wide sense, commensurate with the fame of West Point.

To this end there should be created a professorship of literature and philosophy, with a general supervision of the course in English studies, and a provision in the act creating the chair, that it should be filled by a civilian of broad views and acknowledged ability; and, as a further prerequisite, a knowledge of the world and the quiet address of a scholar and a gentleman. It is with no little trepidation that I have offered advice and ventured to mount the steps of Admonition. But sometimes an



INTERIOR OF MEMORIAL HALL, "THAYER HALL"

observer out in the field, beyond the shadow of the oak, can see and judge of its health better than those who are beneath it; for as they look up, so deep and strong is the green that they do not see those limbs at the top with crimsoning leaves torching the approach of decay.

But to drop all that brings the old in contrast with the new, let me say that the most sober period in the life of old West Point was, I think, those last six or seven months of my stay there. For while to us the future was brightening like a dawn, to her it must have been gray and sober. Her sons were off undergoing the trials of war; on their conduct and their character as men and on their powers to do what she had taught them to do as soldiers and officers, all of her pride, and above everything else, the holy purposes of her aims, were at stake. She could do no more for them or for their country, and, like a mother whose sons had gone into the world, she thought of them often. Thus, while our faces were free from care and lit up by prospects of graduation and the wide stirring field of the war, care, in the language of metaphor, was plowing hers deeply.

Well, spring came, the elms around the Plain and before the barracks leaved out and drooped, it seemed to me, with more benediction than ever; the horse-chestnuts under which Pat

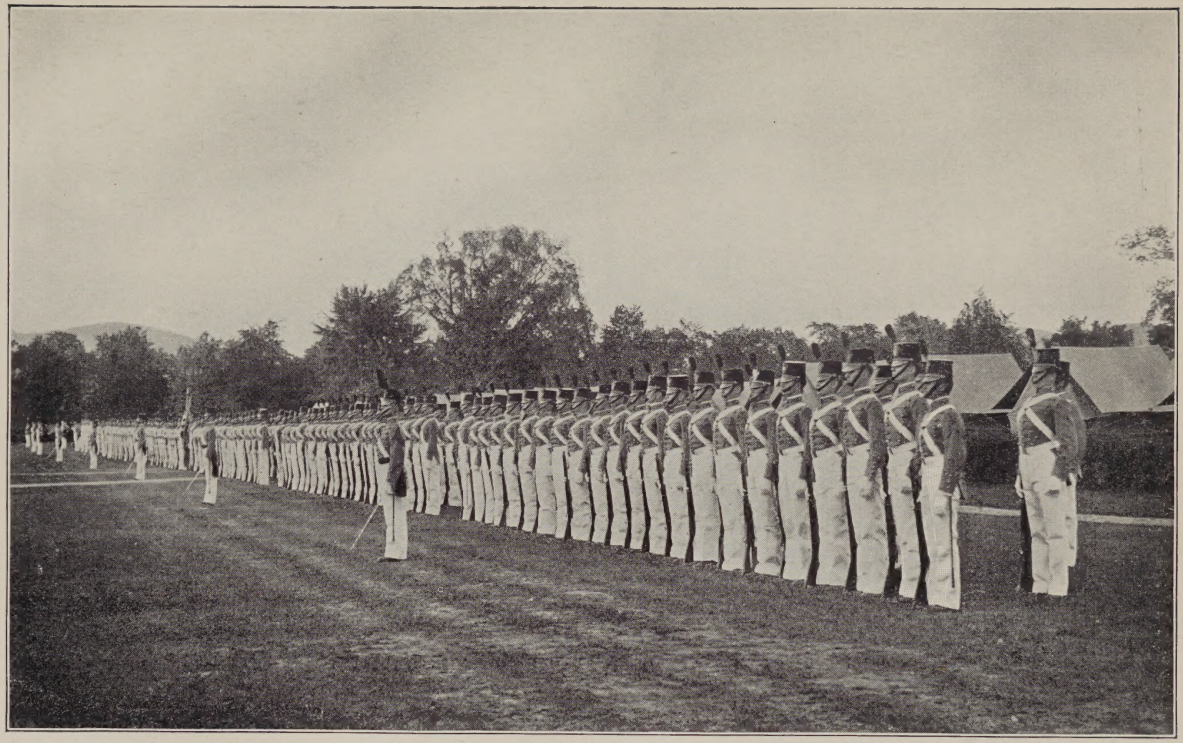
O'Rorke had so patiently drilled me four years before, were abloom, and on the face of Crow Nest and on the brows of the hills the laurel was blooming too. Our trunks and outfit had come. Ball and Black had our class rings ready, and one after another our final examinations were being held. We had attended the last service in the little chapel; the last look had been given to the picture over the chancel, where my eye had rested so often; the legend on the tablet, "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people," had for the last time proclaimed its divine monition; and the touching hymn "When shall we meet again?" had been sung. From my place down in the body of the church I heard Bolles of my class, the tenor, leading the choir, and my eyes grow dim now as I recall the scene and think of him, for in less than a year he died.

The examinations are all over, it is the end of a beautiful June day, the 10th of 1862, and the drum is beating the first call to fall in for the last parade. I go to my room — it is on the second floor of the Fifth Division facing the area — I was living alone, and as I put on my uniform hat and side-arms — at this parade the graduates who are privates do not carry their guns — the musket No. 144 which I have carried for four years knows that the parting hour has come,

and I hear it say, "Good-by, we have been friends; good-by." "Yes, we have been friends indeed, old fellow, but I have not treated you as well as I should have done. I have never honored you by getting on the color line or by winning, and, above all, by retaining, chevrons. Except for four or five months you have been in the ranks on the shoulder of a private." "Do not speak of it," exclaims the old piece. "I have stood here in the rack and enjoyed hearing you and your friends talk and laugh, — I have often wished that I could give you some help when you have been trying to master your mathematics, and you will excuse me if I say that I do not believe you ever were intended to shine in that department." "I know mighty well I was not." "Let that be as it may," continues the old gun, "we have had many a pleasant hour alone. For, as we walked the sentinel's post under starlight and moonlight through the dead hours of the night, you always made a companion of me. I listened while you thought and sometimes talked aloud of your home, your sweetheart, and the days to come; and you listened, I sometimes thought, when I talked." "Yes, I did listen, but your speech, like that of the trees and the grass, the clouds and the winds, — and from boyhood they have all talked to me, — was in a tongue I did not know;

only a word now and then have I understood in your speech or in theirs, but that word made me see for a moment another world. Indirectly you have always spoken to me of uprightness, of duty, and of courage; you have done your share of mute teaching. I hope I may live worthily of you and my other teachers of West Point. Good-by." And I have no doubt that, when the volleys of the Wilderness were thundering, No. 144 and the old bayonet bristled in the gun-rack when some of the shots came near me.

And now the companies are formed — the adjutant, sergeant-major, and markers are out in front ready for the band to strike up; the usual crowd of visitors from all parts of the country young and old, a long line, has gathered under the elms to witness the ceremony, the last parade of the graduating class with the battalion. The sun is just going down, the shadows deepen the green, in tranquillity the day is ending. The band strikes up, the adjutant steps out, with waving plume; the companies are called to attention, and soon are under way. On they go with perfect step, harmonious lines of crinkling white, and over them the polished bayonets glinting in the last rays of the setting sun. Where does the world see a finer sight than when the West Point companies are marching out to parade? The color company wheels into line, its



DRESS PARADE IN CAMP, 1905

banner drooping proudly, and with movements of matchless precision, ease, and grace, one after another the companies come up into line. The commandant has taken his place, the adjutant completes the formation, the battalion is brought to parade rest, and the troop beats off. With royal strains the band moves out on its march down in front of the line, and with music still high and bold it returns to its place on the right of the battalion. And now there is a moment of silence; we all know what is coming, and it is not what trumpets the fields of glory or ambition.

The leader gives the signal, and West Point for the first time and the only time opens its heart to the graduation class — the band is playing "Home, Sweet Home." And, as almost tearfully its deeply affecting notes float over the battalion, there is a deep hush. Hearts are beating low and tenderly in the breasts of the boys who entered in 1858. Are they thinking of their old homes? Oh, no, the days of our companionship are ending — in sunlight and shadow we have passed the four years together. In the ranks are friends tried and true; we know each other well: we know, too, that somewhere in Virginia or elsewhere in the South an open grave is waiting for some, and that this is the last time we shall ever meet as a class. Oh,

heart, come to the window and let us listen to the strains again.

The last tone dies away, the last roll of the drums is beaten, the evening gun is fired, and while Crow Nest is echoing back the discharge of the evening gun the flag — some of whose stars as it hung at the masthead were looking up to the sky and some looking down kindly, we feel sure, on the boys who in a few weeks hence will meet their gaze from parapets and lines of battle — comes softly down. In due time, for the commandant puts the battalion through the manual and the orders are to be read, the adjutant approaches, gives the orders for the privates of the graduating class to join the officers' line, and soon we are all marching up to the commandant. When we salute he lifts his hat, we lift ours, and he says, "I congratulate you, gentlemen." We bow our thanks and with light hearts go back to barracks. On the following day, without ceremony our diplomas were given, and with them orders to report in Washington on the 15th of July. There we were assigned to corps and regiments, and, save a very few, went at once to the field.

And now, dear old Alma Mater, Fountain of Truth, Hearth of Courage, Altar of Duty, Tabernacle of Honor, with a loyal and a grate-

ful heart I have tried, as well as I could, to picture you as you were when you took me, a mere boy, awkward and ignorant, and trained me for the high duties of an officer, unfolding from time to time views of those ever-enduring virtues that characterize the soldier, the Christian, and the gentleman. All that I am I owe to you. May the Keeper of all preserve you; not only for the sake of our country's past glories and high destiny, but for the sake of the ideals of the soldier and the gentleman!

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